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THE NEW REPUBLIC

May 23, 1981 Price $1.25

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TRB

from Washington
May 23, 1981

Guest Workers

During the campaign last fall Ronald Reagan told a Hispanic audience in Corpus Christi, Texas, on September 16 that "undocumented workers"—by which he meant illegal immigrants—should be given visas and allowed to work in the US "for whatever length of time they want to stay." The next day he denied his remarks, saying that they had been obscured by applause and that he had meant to say that Mexican legal aliens should be given temporary visas to work in the US. The *New York Times* reporter noted, "newsmen's tapes of the speech clearly show that Mr. Reagan said he was for the Mexican workers staying as long as they liked."

Today Reagan is president, there are about eight million Americans out of work, immigrants are pouring into the United States, legally and illegally, and Mexican president José Lopez Portillo visits Washington on June 8 and 9. It seems likely that soon we shall hear a good deal more about immigration policy.

Reagan went back to the subject in his interview with Walter Cronkite on March 3, in which he said that alien entry served as a "safety valve" for Mexico's hard-pressed economy. It would be in the interest of the US, he said, to preserve "stability south of the border"; Mexico and the US should get together "and grant visas . . . they would be able to go legally back across the border if they wanted to, and come back across. The border would become a two-way border for all our people."

The White House staff has subsequently explained that they are working on something like the old bracero, or guest worker, program. It was tried in 1941-64 with statutory authority granted in 1949. Braceros were restricted to areas certified by the secretary of labor as having a labor shortage. During the program's peak, in 1955-59, over 400,000 workers were admitted, mostly to California and Texas. Then the labor shortage ended and numbers steadily declined. One sequel of the braceros' departure was a rise in farm wage rates.

Europe tried guest workers too, but Germany dropped the plan in 1973, France in 1974, and Switzerland and Holland have curtailed their programs.

It is hard to believe that Reagan will try to revive the bracero program now (though we said much the same thing when he first embraced the Kemp-Roth three-year, 30 percent tax cut bill). It would, of course, solve the problem of illegal immigrants—they would simply become legal, tagged and numbered, and told to go home when Washington decided they should. It would require a fantastic amount of federal bookkeeping and bureaucratic regulation. It probably also would require legislation and it doesn't seem likely that Congress would assent. Bills are pending now for a sharp reduction, not an increase, in immigration. There is also extensive unemployment in the US, and polls indicate that the public wants less immigration. A Roper poll last June showed 80 percent favoring a cut, and 91 percent who said "yes" for an all-out drive to stop illegals.

Reagan's effort to conciliate Mexico's oil-rich Portillo, by whatever means, is not really the big issue. There are several coordinate matters. One is law enforcement. One of the biggest unreported stories in the country is the collapse of immigration control along the border and the cynical way in which it is being accepted. It is like Prohibition enforcement under Harding. Former AID administrator John J. Gilligan asserted on March 3, 1978, that "one-quarter of the adult Mexican work force is in the United States because they can't find work in their own country." A task force of nine cabinet members under President Ford, chaired by Attorney General Edward Levi, reported in December 1976, "levels of illegal immigration are not accurately known, but most recent estimates run to several million yearly." The Select Committee on Immigration headed by Father Hesburgh took a conservative figure this March: three to six million illegals now in the country. Some estimate twice that number. Border guards say that for every illegal they stop (about 900,000 a year) one or two slip in.

President Reagan's new budget slashes funds for the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which runs the Border Patrol. The patrol can't pay for gasoline to run its jeeps and copters full time. At any one time the number of patrol agents guarding the nearly 6,000-mile land borders of the US is 350, fewer than the number of New York City transit police.

Most illegals come from Mexico, which has a population growth rate of 3.2 percent a year—three times that of the US. Mexico has 68 million people and may have 134 million by 2000. To act as a good neighbor, as Reagan suggests (that is, absorb surplus Mexicans to give "stability" and act as a "safety valve"), the US might have to absorb half of the Mexican growth, say 30 million in the next generation.

There are other issues involved. For 100 years the Statue of Liberty has told humankind to send us its huddled masses. It is almost part of our religion. Now we are paralyzed with indecision. We take more immigrants than the rest of the world together. Can we seal the border now, penalize employers who hire illegals, require an identification card from workers? Those are wounds to the American psyche.

Still, people must face facts, like them or not. The biggest threat to civilization, aside from nuclear war, is the population explosion. The United States has its own growth rate under control, but most of the world hasn't—particularly the poorer countries. There are bad times ahead, and not very far ahead either, according to demographers. The United States can offer food, supplies, and leadership in the future, but it surpasses even our power to offer a physical home to all of the homeless.

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Correspondence

Freeze on fuel assistance

To the editors:

The escalated decontrol of oil may or may not give President Reagan and Energy Secretary James Edwards red faces from political embarrassment—as Rich Jaroslovsky mused in his article ("Reagan and Big Oil," *TNR*, May 2)—but that decision and the scuttling of federal conservation and fuel assistance programs will make a lot of New England noses frosty red this winter.

Reagan and Edwards fail to grasp that Americans long ago turned down the thermostats on their oil and gas furnaces and put on their wool sweaters. Most of us survive. But these rising prices pose a serious hardship among the elderly whose fixed incomes keep them from matching the oil industry increase for increase. What is desperately needed is a federally funded fuel assistance program, federal support for conservation and alternative energy resource development, and a strong signal from the White House that it will tolerate no financial foolishness from the oil industry. One such signal would be to support full funding of the special counsel's office in the Energy Department—an investment of about $35 million with a payback to the taxpayers of three or four times that amount in recovered oil company overcharges.

Barney Frank
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Afrikaner friends and enemies

To the editors:

"Such Good Friends" by Stephen Cohen in *TNR*'s May 2 issue is right on target. It brings to my mind an episode in 1942 when I, chief of O.S.S. South Africa, along with Lieutenant George Memanus, assistant naval attaché in Pretoria, took a trip to Namibia (the southwest). Nazi sentiment was strong in this former German colony and many ships were being sunk off that coast. We went to investigate the reason.

An Afrikaner lawyer, resident of the coastal town of Swakomund, and a strong supporter of Jan Smuts, told us this story: in 1938 he discovered that detailed plans had been laid by the Nazis with the support of local Afrikaners for a putsch on Hitler's birthday to take over the country. Apparently this met with the approval of J. B. Hertzog, Nationalist prime minister of South Africa. Guns, ammunition, and other supplies were in place.

Our informant, knowing that a letter or telegram would be read by Hertzog's censorship bureau, took a train to Cape Town and informed Smuts who was then minister of defense. The day before the scheduled putsch, a detachment of South African police arrived by train, arrested the leaders of the conspiracy, and confiscated the weapons. Hertzog, it is said, surprised, asked Jannie Smuts where he had heard of the plot. Smuts did not inform him.

During the war a large majority of the Afrikaners were working against us and were the cause of many of our ships being sunk.

Goodhue Livingston
New York, New York

To the editors:

I regret that Stephen Cohen failed to do his homework properly for the article in your issue of May 2, in which he charges President Reagan with "serious distortion of the historical record" in a remark about South Africa's serving "with us in all our wars."

President Reagan, who is informed about anti-communist causes, surely knew—as Cohen apparently did not—that a South African Air Force Squadron sent by Prime Minister Malan served under our command in Korea in the 1950s. The president's phrasing may not have been "offhand," but calculated to draw unwary writers like Cohen who overlook Korea.

Cohen's enumeration of the pro-Nazi activities of some of those who have led the Afrikaner Nationalist party since its 1948 election victory is essentially accurate. And he might have added that they granted free pardons to convicted traitors who worked for Hitler, and to convicted saboteurs. (President Reagan pardons people he considers "right-minded" too.) But Cohen's pervasive implication that all Afrikaners opposed the war against Hitler is an unjustified "distortion of the historical record." The majority of South Africans who fought in World War II—all of them volunteers—were Afrikaners. They formed 60 percent of the armed forces. English-speaking South Africans constituted the remaining 40 percent. The same proportions are evident on grave markers in South African military cemeteries in North Africa and Italy. I knew many of these men and served with them; and I remember that an Afrikaner ex-serviceman, "Sailor" Malan, led the protest rallies of the 1950s against apartheid laws to remove Cape Coloured voters from the common roll.

South Africa's present rulers have enacted a racial caste system and unjust laws without comparison. Most of the victims of these laws are black. The regime has also been singularly successful in labeling as "communist" all—of any race whatever—who oppose apartheid. Among the many banned, or imprisoned without charge or trial, under the all-purpose Suppression of Communism Act (1950) and its various amendments was the Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Albert Luthuli. (My book about him was banned also, because a banned person may not be quoted.)

This anti-communist zeal is what endears the South African regime to some supporters of President Reagan. One mark of this zeal is that when few Communists, or none, are available for whipping, liberals are always acceptable substitutes. Prime Minister Vorster's axiom was "Communism kills; but liberalism leads into ambush in order to kill." One should therefore, unlike Stephen Cohen, beware of ambush. Zeal to vilify apartheid should not lead to the vilification of all Afrikaners. Nor should one too readily forget that there was a Korean War. Giving witness to one's opposition to apartheid does not justify slanting or overlooking the facts of the historical record. Shallow criticism angers dissident Afrikaners who know the facts, and it tends to discourage them. And because it is easily rebutted, it pleases those in the United States who favor closer ties with the South African regime.

Edward Callan
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Stephen Cohen replies:

My thesis was that the great majority of Afrikaners favored a German victory in World War II. Mr. Callan asserts that Afrikaners comprised 60 percent of South Africa's World War II armed forces. If his figure is accepted, it means 78,000 of the 130,000 member forces were Afrikaners. Mr. Callan fails to

(continued on page 40)

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

May 23, 1981

After Bobby Sands

For 800 years England occupied and plundered Ireland, depriving its people of their freedom and often their lives. For most of the time since Ireland was partitioned in 1920, Protestants in Northern Ireland have discriminated against the Catholic minority, depriving them of jobs, decent housing, and fair political representation. But these facts do not remotely justify the terrorism practiced in Northern Ireland by the Provisional Wing of the IRA or even much sympathy for terrorists who choose to starve themselves to death to attract attention and support for their cause. Nor do historic English and Protestant injustices warrant, by any sensible or humane logic, demands for Great Britain to pull precipitously out of Northern Ireland or to submit to other political demands by the IRA. The proper role for Britain, having been the cause of so much woe for Ireland, is to stay as long as it takes to establish peace and order. The British are playing that role, and Americans ought to support them.

To the extent that they understand the troubles in Northern Ireland, most Americans probably do support the policies of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher —policies, by the way, that are endorsed by the opposition Labour party. American understanding is impaired, however, by two influences: first, a press and television that thrive on scenes of bottle-tossing children more than on real information; and second, Irish-American political leaders, most of them liberal Democrats, who are torn between childhood anti-British prejudices and mature good sense. Even America's four most prominent Irish politicians—Edward Kennedy, Thomas P. O'Neill, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Hugh Carey—could not bring themselves to give unequivocal support to Margaret Thatcher in the aftermath of IRA terrorist Bobby Sands's death. They deplored the violence, but hesitated to place the blame on the IRA, where it belongs. Instead they criticized Thatcher for "a posture of inflexibility that must lead inevitably to more senseless violence and more needless death in Northern Ireland."

The four politicians called on Thatcher to "implement sensible and reasonable requirements in the administration of the Maze prison—reforms that offer real hope of ending this violent impasse and achieving a peaceful and humanitarian settlement of hunger strikes that are now nearing the point of no return." They did not spell out the reforms they favored, but the fact is that no reforms are likely to lead to a halt in hunger striking except capitulation to IRA demands for special political status in Northern Ireland prisons. Political status actually was granted by a previous British government, in 1972, but the results were disastrous. IRA members used their freedom from ordinary prison labor to make weapons, plan escapes, and recruit other prisoners who were satisfied to know that the next time they landed in jail for an armed robbery or a murder they could claim it was a political act and be freed from normal prison routines. If anything, violence in Northern Ireland worsened during the period before political status for prisoners was revoked in 1976. The European Commission on Human Rights has ruled that no national or international law requires granting any special status. There is no such provision in the Republic of Ireland, either.

During the early 1970s the British were undeniably rough on IRA prisoners—subjecting them to piercing noises and long periods of standing against walls, hooding them, and depriving them of sleep and food. That's long since stopped. If anything, a case can be made that the Thatcher government is now excessively lenient, allowing prisoners to wear prison-issued civilian clothing, take extra recreation, receive two visits per month from outside, and get emergency home leaves. In return, the prisoners stopped their "dirty protest"—smearing their cells with excrement and uneaten food—and started hunger strikes instead. The lesson seems to be that leniency doesn't pay.

Few American news organizations have made it clear, or clear enough, just who the IRA is and what it represents. One that has is the *Christian Science Monitor*,

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which recently enumerated the offenses committed by the 416 Maze inmates who took part in earlier protests for special political status: 74 had been convicted of murder, 45 of attempted murder, 118 of setting bombs, 96 of possessing firearms, and the other 83 of robbery. Bobby Sands was not in jail for passing out leaflets, but for possessing firearms. His successor in death, Francis Hughes, was in for murder. The *Monitor* is nearly alone, too, in exploring the Provisionals' political aims, which include a good deal more than reunification of Ireland. Their platform calls for nationalization of industry, creation of a "Democratic Socialist Republic," and pursuit of an "anti-imperialist" and "anti-colonialist" foreign policy. IRA officials deny it, but strong evidence is emerging that the Provisionals get at least some of their guns through Libya. IRA officials make no bones about their sympathy for the PLO and for communist revolutionaries in the third world. Conservative Irish-American communities that support such a group are badly informed or consumed beyond reason with historic hatred for Britain.

The antagonism between Ireland and Britain can no longer be justified. Britain sent its troops into Northern Ireland 12 years ago to protect the Catholic population, not to repress it. Since it took over direct rule of Ulster, it has put through measures to expand civil rights and economic opportunities for Catholics that were denied under Protestant Unionist rule. Recent British governments repeatedly have explored ways to set up "power-sharing" and other self-rule programs on an equitable basis. All have been frustrated, usually by Protestant intransigence. The idea that British withdrawal from Northern Ireland would be good for Catholics is ridiculous. It probably would lead to civil war, or at least war between IRA terrorists and Protestant terrorists whipped into action by the likes of Reverend Ian Paisley, who at the moment (contrary to the impression conveyed on American television) is not the dominant leader of the Protestant community. It is also ridiculous to imagine that Britain is remaining in Northern Ireland to secure "colonialist" advantages. Britain currently pays out two billion dollars a year to support and provide security for Ulster. There are no advantages in this, only burdens.

Under Thatcher, the British government has begun intensive talks with the Irish Republic for the first time in 60 years. It's doubtful that the talks should or ever will lead to a union between Northern Ireland and the Republic except conceivably in the loosest of confederations decades from now. American liberals shouldn't leap to favor a union as the best solution. Ireland, after all, is a semi-theocracy with a constitution that bans abortion, contraception, and divorce. Forced into a union, Protestants likely would react violently, and if Britain can't keep the peace, how could Ireland? There may be no solution to the Irish problem, but the government of Great Britain is looking for one. It deserves American support for taking its responsibilities seriously.

And Now the Pope

Once more a world figure has been gunned down. This time it is Pope John Paul II, a humane leader of power and presence. His attacker, Mehmet Ali Agca, is the product of a deadly mix of ultra-nationalism, Islamic fanaticism, and deranged romanticism, nurtured in the atmosphere of chronic Turkish terrorism.

In this country assassination attempts are infrequent, aimed at the famous, and most often committed by madmen. But in much of the world assassins strike daily, at anonymous innocents, and out of ideological fanaticism. In Ulster, Spain, Italy, and Turkey terrorism has become a way of life. In the often sanctimonious search for the "root causes" of terrorism, one factor is often ignored: the willingness of civilized society to tolerate (through the medium of "trying to understand") murder when dressed in the rhetoric of peace and justice. Francis Hughes was appealing to precisely that sentiment when he demanded that his murder of a British soldier be treated as a political, not a criminal, act.

"It is incomprehensible why anyone should try to harm a gentle, Holy Father. . . ," said Theodore Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame University. "There is no semblance of justification for terrorists now they have aimed at one of the greatest apostles of justice and peace." Father Hesburgh has long opposed terrorism. But why only now has it lost any "semblance of justification"? Why not when judges in Italy were kneecapped, liberal journalists in Turkey shot dead in the streets, or government officials in Spain blown up in their cars? Why not at the death of any of the thousands of anonymous functionaries whose only crime was to carry out the humbler offices of Western society? More than two years ago John Paul himself warned that the great danger from terrorism lies in its capacity to "murder man's sense of sin." It is not, as some have suggested, that if the pope can be shot then nothing is sacred. It is that since nothing is sacred—since we can rationalize the murder of innocent people on the flimsiest of political grounds—then even the pope can be shot.

A Fool and His Money

Thrift Shift

Somebody had to do something to help the thrift industry, as savings and loan associations are called in business circles. They're going broke. Their depositors have deserted them by tens of billions of dollars for the higher interest rates offered by the money market funds. Nor can the average S&L pay higher interest rates to woo them back, even if government regulations permitted it. No institution can pay depositors 14

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percent on their money when it has its own money tied up in ancient eight or nine percent mortgages.

The situation is so bad that, technically, probably half the thrift institutions in the country are bankrupt. On paper what they own is worth less than what they owe. Not that they're going to close their doors next week, although sooner or later they will unless something good happens to them. That's why the Federal Home Loan Bank Board changed the rules, ending the fixed-rate mortgage by giving thrift institutions permission to issue any kind of mortgage they care to design to protect themselves.

THE RESULT is the highly advertised variable rate mortgage, which will make it legally possible for home payments to jump around from month to month. In theory the Jones family could be paying $500 on the mortgage for their bungalow in January and $1,500 in July. In practice the new mortgages will put limits on the swings in payments so that families will be able to plan their budgets. The likelihood is that when the rates jump up, the leap in the interest payments will be deferred and added on to the principal so that the size of the mortgage itself will increase. We may be moving into an era in which the interest payments are so high that home owners will not be able to increase the equity on their houses. Their situation could turn them into de facto suburban sharecroppers who pay and pay to the bank but never get to own their homes. They'll be more like renters than homeowners as they discover that buying a house is no longer a way of saving.

The traditional down payment will be more like a security deposit which they'll get back when the time comes to sell the house—provided they've made the repairs needed to keep the place up. For that reason Black & Decker is a good speculative stock if you're not in a hurry for ripe fruit. The world's largest manufacturer of portable power tools, B&D has tough competition from Germany and Japan, but it's been breaking its back to meet it so it can sell all those homeowners all that fix-it-yourself equipment.

The company has been doing the one thing it must do to stay ahead of foreign competition. It has a continuing program of sinking a lot of money into new plants designed to cut labor costs. This emphasis on increasing productivity allows the company to cut prices even in the face of inflation. An electric drill today costs only two-fifths of what it did 20 years ago. In addition to being fiendish on keeping prices down, B&D keeps the wolf from its door by continually introducing new products. In 1916 it was the first electric drill with pistol grip; in 1953 the first powered sander for home shop use; in the early 1960s the first cordless power tools. Lately we've had Workmate, the unusually handy combination workbench, sawhorse, and vise that a football player advertises on TV, and Dustbuster, a cordless vacuum cleaner. They're always tinkering with something in the shed at B&D.

B&D also has stock that the market seems to have given up on for the moment. Selling in the teens now, it was going for almost $30 a share five years ago. Be a little patient with it and you might make some money.

While you're waiting you might do something about your real estate, if you're lucky enough to have bought when it was easy to do so. The drift of the Reagan administration seems to be away from backing real estate and home construction, the policy of every other post-World War II presidency. The Reaganauts are learning that you can have high interest rates and a soggy construction industry without bringing on a serious recession. The money that will not be lent and spent in housing can be lent and spent in military construction, thereby generating enough employment and business elsewhere in the economy. Indeed, a weak housing and construction market can help offset the inflationary pressures caused by upping production at the bomb factory.

There is talk around Washington that the Reaganauts are meditating a swipe at that holy of holies, the income tax deduction on mortgage interest. The idea would be to limit such deductions to one home, your principal residence, thereby getting the government out of the business of subsidizing vacation properties. This is the first administration in a very long time that isn't terrified of high interest rates if that's what it takes to bring down the inflation rate.

Any way you interpret these developments, it means that houses are going to be harder to sell, their prices are going to be lower, and they will no longer be the hedge against inflation they have been these past 15 years; their prices will not keep up with inflation. It might be wise to figure that the dollar value of the average home in the next few years will increase by only half the inflation rate instead of what it had been doing, which was about double the rate.

It's time for the doctors who bought those condominiums on spec to bail out. The catch is that to sell many a house now your broker is going to tell you that you will have to cooperate in what is referred to as "creative financing." That means that you don't get all of your money out in one lump cash payment. You'll have to take a lot of it in monthly checks on the second mortgage or deed of trust that you give to the seller when you transfer your own, old first mortgage, that nine percent that's killing the savings and loan association, over to your buyer. Beware. If after six months those checks don't keep coming, you may have a hard time getting your money or your house back. Consult your lawyer and make sure he is a mean-spirited chap who believes in original and subsequent sin.

If you do get your money out and you don't want to

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Nick's Picks . . . Bart's Charts

Ronald Reagan may be winning his battles on Capitol Hill over the direction of the nation's economy, but he is not faring so well on Wall Street. It was only a year ago that candidate George Bush was assailing his rival's "voodoo economics," and now Vice President Bush's blue-blood brothers on Wall Street seem to be concurring. The hearts of American businessmen may be with Reagan, but their minds are betting against him, leading to chaos in the financial markets. Interest rates are continuing on their year-long roller coaster journey, this time soaring upward once again. Their rapid rise has sent the stock and bond markets tumbling. What's going on?

Reaganomics calls simultaneously for sharp tax cuts and an 88 percent rise in defense expenditures, from $162 billion in fiscal 1981 to $304 billion in 1985. LBJ's refusal to raise taxes to pay for the war in Vietnam is generally agreed to have contributed directly to the dramatic increase in inflation in the early 1970s. Yet the Reagan administration chooses to ignore this Vietnam legacy, proposing an increase in military spending three times larger than that of the 1960s, without a comparable cut in consumption or increase in taxes. The consensus is that high inflation is going to be with us for a while, and lenders of money are raising interest rates—the price of money—to stay ahead of the game.

As Wall Street goes, so goes our hypothetical fund this month. Almost every stock and bond we own has declined. The bond markets have plummeted and our holdings in Beatrice Foods and Resorts International have fallen to new lows. Our stock in Gulf Oil and MONY Mortgage has met a similar fate. The major exception to this downward trend has been Thomas Nelson Publishers, the largest seller of Bibles in the United States. Business must be pretty good these days. In the two months since we invested in this stock the price has risen 52 percent, from $18¾ to $28½. We are going to play it safe this month and get out while the going is good. We'll sell our Bibles for $151,050, a short-term capital gain of $51,675 (before paying our broker's fee). Our other holdings may be foundering, but turning to God has paid off.

We deposit the net proceeds from this sale into our money market fund, Dreyfus Liquid Assets, which has been earning an average 14.5 percent interest over the last four weeks. This is down slightly from last month's 14.7 percent, but in the last week rising interest rates have pulled our average up to 14.8 percent, and in the coming weeks the interest rate we are earning will climb quickly. Because our money market fund invests in 30- to 60-day bonds, our yield lags slightly behind the bond markets, which makes it simple to make short-term predictions of our interest. With the prime rate nearing 20 percent, we know that Dreyfus will be paying us higher interest as its older investments at lower rates are converted into new ones.

With our $1,091 in interest and the net proceeds of our Bible sale, we have $248,462 with which to begin round 11. For this month's selection we will go with Harte-Hanks Communications even though at $35⅝ per share we are paying slightly more than we would like. We will have to pay $99,750 for 2,800 shares and an additional $998 (one percent) to our broker. After 46 weeks our portfolio looks like this:

	April 14	May 11
93 Beatrice Foods bonds	$ 74,284	$ 69,983
156 Chrysler Financial Corp. bonds	93,795	86,580
140 Resorts International bonds	86,800	84,350
11,250 shares MONY Mortgage	80,156	78,750
1,640 shares Nucor	127,305	121,360
11,778 shares Templeton Growth Fund	93,400	93,282
2,250 shares Gulf Oil	75,656	74,813
95 fresh broiler futures on margin	117,800	107,825
5,300 shares Thomas Nelson	131,175	—
7,400 shares Kinder-Care	99,900	100,825
2,800 shares Harte-Hanks		99,750
Dreyfus Liquid Assets	97,832	147,714
TOTAL	$1,078,103	**1,065,232**

The score so far (since June 20, 1980):

Consumer Price Index (estimated)	+ 8.8 percent
Dow Jones Industrial Average	+10.2 percent
TNR's Fool Fund	+ 6.5 percent

Bart Rubenstein

Bart Rubenstein is general manager of *Channels* magazine.

spend your nights swallowing Pepto-Bismol as you worry about a bunch of stocks whose prices jump up and down daily to the detriment of your tummy, you might want to think of the current despised bond. When you buy a bond you are in effect lending a company money. The company promises to pay interest for so many years, after which it must repay the original loan. (Some bonds permit the company to pre-pay, so read the fine print and decide if that bothers you. Companies exercise their pre-pay option when they have a lot of cash in the till and the vice president for corporate finance decides the interest rates on the bonds are too high.)

Inflation rips the value of a bond. Not only are you stuck with whatever the interest rate is on the bond, but you can't sell it for what you paid for it. A $1,000 bond may fetch only $750 or less, so to get the full face value you must sit on the damn thing until it matures, and that could be sometime in the next century. The bondholder gets brutalized like the holder of the low-interest mortgage.

On the other hand, bonds are safe. In times of trouble bondholders are at the head of the line and get paid first or nearly first. Bonds also can be a decent investment if you buy them at the right moment, which this may be. Ultra-safe and certain bonds of companies like AT&T are paying around 16 percent. That's even better than your money market fund, with the added advantage that your money market interest rate may drop but the interest on a bond can't. It stays whatever it was when you bought it. Sixteen percent is at least 50 percent higher than the inflation rate is now and is likely to be for some time. Whether the Reaganauts can win the inflation battle remains to

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be seen, but they stand an excellent chance of knocking the rate down to about seven percent in the not too distant future. This would mean that your AT&T bond would be as good an investment in the 1980s as that house was in the 1970s.

If that's too dull and you prefer the excitement of flying blind, you might want to consider Dunlap and Associates, who build machines called flight simulators to teach pilots to do just that. Dunlap has contracts to build such machines for the A-310 air bus, one of the new low-fuel, low-noise planes the airline industry will be phasing in through the 1980s as its older jets, thanks to their noise and high cost of operation, are retired. Dunlap also sells simulators for both fixed-wing planes and helicopters to the armed services, so that this might be a way to cash in on Mr. Reagan's profligate spending at the Pentagon without actually making money on munitions. It is recommended for liberals blessed with the sort of Jesuitical conscience that can appreciate the fact that simulators will ease our energy bind by helping the Air Force to train pilots in a way that uses less fuel.

Dunlap and Associates isn't the only company that simulates reality. Apparently the Washington Post Company has done the same with its famous Pulitzer Prize fooling story about Jimmy, the non-existent eight-year-old heroin addict. Which brings us to the subject of newspaper stocks. Newspapers are exceptionally profitable industries which, thanks to the First Amendment, are virtually immune from consumer protection laws and legislation. As the Jimmy case shows, they need not guarantee their product. Moreover, newspapers are one of the very few if not the last of the industries that control the retail price of their product. Except in a few cities where there is union opposition, the newspaper industry is highly automated in almost all of its production processes.

The Jimmy story had no adverse effects on Washington Post Company stock, which, no matter what improvements are made in the reliability of the stories of this highly profitable asset, is not recommended. There are three problems with the Post Company: 1) a revolving-door history in its upper management that makes market analysts nervous; 2) a costly publishing debacle in *Inside Sports*, a new magazine with little hope of profitability in the next few years; 3) a record for using the large amounts of cash generated by the *Post*, *Newsweek*, and the company's TV properties to pay too much for unprofitable acquisitions; and 4) two classes of stock that give the Katherine Graham family control of the company, which would be OK except they don't like to pay large enough dividends, apparently because they personally don't need the money. Incidentally, the same situation exists with the New York Times Company.

Because of their high profitability and relative invulnerability to recession, newspaper stocks aren't cheap, but the Fool says that if you can get Harte-Hanks Communications anywhere around 30 dollars a share, you've got a fairly good bet. Knight-Ridder newspapers at around the same price is definitely snap-up-able, although at the moment Harte-Hanks, a Texas-based company, seems to be the insiders' favorite because it has shown considerable initiative in going into cable TV and free shoppers, which may not do much for journalism but do wondrous things for the balance sheet, which is what we care about.

If AT&T looks like it's going to succeed in getting the government to let it put the yellow pages and other kinds of advertising into your home via phone lines, be prepared to dump your newspaper stock on short notice. Don't wait to dump your Ford Motor Company stock. Ford had to borrow money to pay its last dividend. This can't go on long. If it has to omit the dividend, as it very well may, pension funds and other conservative investors are going to sell their Ford holdings. So sell yours first and don't wait for the crash. May good and golden things befall you.

Nicholas von Hoffman

A fizzled blitz in Oklahoma.

NCPAC Lays an Egg

The National Conservative Political Action Committee came out of the 1980 elections with a reputation as a smooth-running giant killer. NCPAC (friends and foes pronounce the acronym "Nick-pack") spent $1.2 million campaigning against six liberal US senators: George McGovern of South Dakota, Birch Bayh of Indiana, Frank Church of Idaho, John Culver of Iowa, Thomas Eagleton of Missouri, and Alan Cranston of California. When the smoke cleared on November 5, only Eagleton and Cranston were still standing. One week later NCPAC had already announced its senatorial hit list for 1982. Twenty incumbents—three Republicans and all but three of the 20 Democratic senators up for reelection in 1982—were marked for extinction. NCPAC, like other independent political action groups, can spend millions of dollars unencumbered by campaign funding ceilings as long as it has no contact with the candidate it favors. The organization doesn't usually campaign for a candidate anyway. It campaigns against his opponent: usually a Democrat, always a liberal. But NCPAC's attack on House Budget Committee chairman James R. Jones of Oklahoma during the Easter recess was a disorganized effort that tarnished the organization's steamroller image.

On April 13 John Terry Dolan, NCPAC's 28-year-old chief enforcer, announced a target of four Democratic congressmen he said were frustrating efforts to pass President Ronald Reagan's economic program. Besides Jones, the list consisted of House Ways and Means chairman Dan Rostenkowski of Illinois, House

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Majority Leader Jim Wright of Texas, and Senator Paul Sarbanes of Maryland. Sarbanes and Rostenkowski might be lumped in the liberal pot, but Jones and Wright were another matter. Jones, for example, has a lifetime rating of 58 percent from the American Conservative Union (though after last year's 22 percent rating, he has begun to fall from grace). The 42-year-old Tulsa Democrat represents a strongly Republican district. After working his way through Georgetown University Law School as a House aide, Jones joined President Lyndon Johnson's staff at the age of 25. In 1972 Jones became the first Democrat in 22 years to represent the First District, winning an easy victory while Nixon was burying McGovern by a better than three-to-one margin statewide. Since then he has won reelection four times with 54 to 68 percent of the vote.

Dolan said NCPAC would spend $100,000 battling Jones, $50,000 on Rostenkowski, $450,000 on Wright, and $400,000 on Sarbanes. Using a media blitz, the Virginia-based group hoped to brand the four as big-spending liberals and to soften them up for the *coup de grace* in 1982. But NCPAC may have been the big loser in the anti-Jones campaign. The disorganized effort left November's giant killer looking like an Easter lamb—undercutting the group's most effective weapon, intimidation.

Dolan apparently forgot to check with Tulsa's television stations before he announced his anti-Jones media campaign, and the three network affiliates turned him down flat. Though NCPAC's ads have been rejected by stations in the past, NCPAC had never before been blacked out of a market. The Tulsa stations say they rejected the ads because they do not accept "advocacy advertising" and because they felt their newscasts and public affairs programing covered the issues NCPAC sought to raise. Dolan threatened to sue the stations if he found they had discriminated against him, but he admitted he had no proof of unfair treatment. The only station NCPAC succeeded in placing its ads with was Tulsa Cable Television, which has 85,000 subscribers. (NCPAC has done better with its ads attacking Senator Sarbanes. Several television stations in Baltimore and Washington carried the 30-second spots. One of the reasons Sarbanes has been targeted is because much of Maryland is in the Washington television market. By trashing Sarbanes in the living rooms of other Hill liberals, NCPAC hopes to intimidate them with visions of a similar fate.)

IN ADDITION to the Tulsa television snafu, a NCPAC poll of Jones's district caused problems. Questions used in the survey misrepresented Jones's position on issues, and a question asking voters whom they would favor in a First District race—Jones or Tulsa mayor Jim Inhofe, a Reagan Republican—showed the mayor finishing an embarrassingly distant second to the incumbent. The survey results had Jones ahead of Inhofe by a 59-to-20 margin. Inhofe ran against Jones in 1976 and lost, 56 to 44. Dolan said he used Inhofe's name in his poll because he knew the mayor had high name recognition, not because he was trying to draft him to run against Jones. But Dolan knows Inhofe and supported him in the 1976 race.

Dolan released the poll in Washington on April 23 and Inhofe learned the results from Tulsa reporters. Obviously displeased and embarrassed, Inhofe phoned Dolan the next day to tell him to straighten out the mess. Dolan wasn't very successful. He explained that his poll showed the Tulsans would reject Jones if they knew his "true" record. As proof, Dolan cited a question asking respondents: "Does Rep. Jones favor increased or decreased spending on defense and social programs?" A majority of respondents said Jones favored increased defense spending and decreased social spending. Wrong, said Dolan, the Jones budget proposal would cut defense and boost social spending.

But it was Dolan who was wrong. Tulsans' perception of Jones's plan was correct. Jones's proposal would have increased defense spending from Jimmy Carter's projection and decreased social spending—not as much as Reagan's, but still plenty. Well, said Dolan, "I guess that question doesn't prove a heck of a lot." Dolan was wrong again. It proved NCPAC had not taken the time to prepare its survey properly.

STILL, even an erratic juggernaut can't be ignored. NCPAC is continuing its polling, and Jones expects the next survey to show a more negative response. The first poll was completed before the budget controversy and before President Reagan was shot.

Jones says NCPAC's strategy is to create an impression of vulnerability. An aide in former senator Church's unsuccessful reelection campaign has told Jones's staffers that the biggest mistake their man can make is to respond personally to NCPAC's charges. To do so would entangle the congressman in a continuous cycle of charges and counter-charges, he said. So, borrowing from the campaigns of those who have survived NCPAC, the Jones people quickly set up an outfit called Oklahomans for Truth. This group, headed by two wealthy Tulsa businessmen, will respond to NCPAC when necessary, allowing Jones to keep out of the crossfire.

NCPAC hasn't accomplished much in Oklahoma so far, but it has managed to stir some interest among Republicans in running against Jones. Last year the Democratic incumbent nearly got a free ride. But state senator Frank Keating, awaiting confirmation as US attorney for northern Oklahoma, is already talking about a 1982 race. Keating says that Jones has appeared invulnerable before, but that the budget battle has hurt him. If NCPAC finds its aim against Jones, Keating won't be the only one considering a bid.

Paul J. Cleary

Paul J. Cleary is a political writer for the Tulsa *World*.

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'Quiet strength' carried the day.

France Picks the Left

Paris

The week of May 3 was a great time to be an American in Paris. The exchange rate was going through the roof. By Friday the 8th, two days before the French went to the polls to elect a president, the dollar had hit a ten-year high against the franc. The main cause of this sudden spurt was simple nervousness over the outcome of the French election. "Anything that shows Mitterrand in the lead will weaken the franc," is how one French currency trader put it, and the private polls taken that week were all emphatic: Francois Mitterrand, the Socialist candidate, was likely to be the next president, and well before the election on May 10, everyone in the French establishment knew it.

The franc's miserable week, though, was almost the sole symbol of apprehension. In the past whenever the left looked like it was about to win an election, panic would seize the French establishment, and enough of that panic would filter down to the rest of the citizenry to ensure that the right remained in power. When Mitterrand was neck-and-neck with Valéry Giscard D'Estaing in the 1974 race, large amounts of French currency were spirited out of the country just before the election. Business interests in 1974 worked hard to paint a vivid portrait of all the worst-case scenarios: Communists in the government, widespread nationalizations, massive confiscations of wealth and property, economic chaos, a government in tatters. The pattern was repeated during the legislative elections of 1977, when again the left seemed poised to win.

But this time all was quiet. From the left there were the Communists, whose preelection saber-rattling in previous years had helped ensure the reelection of the right because they scared so many people. This time the Communists were keeping a discreet silence, and from the right, the French establishment was equally discreet—including those business interests that stood to lose the most from a Mitterrand victory because they were targeted by the Socialists for nationalization. There was nervousness—witness the foundering franc—but no panic. Both sides seemed to feel that the Socialists were going to win in any case, and that the safest course was simply to avoid saying anything that might sour relations with a Mitterrand government.

And of course the left did win this time. It won big. The final tally was 51.75 percent for Mitterrand to 48.24 percent for the incumbent Giscard. The margin of victory was more than a million votes. (By comparison, seven years ago Giscard beat Mitterrand by a scant 400,000.) At 8 p.m. on election day, when the television networks announced that Mitterrand had won, France exploded. In all the large cities, people streamed into the streets to celebrate. It was a joyous, exuberant night. In Paris, thousands made their way to the Place de la Bastille, where they spent the night cheering, chanting slogans ("*Giscard en chômage*"), listening to impromptu concerts, and drinking wine.

By electing François Mitterrand, the French made history. The left had waited a long time for the chance to celebrate; it had not won a national election since Charles de Gaulle founded the Fifth Republic in 1958. Until now the center-right coalitions headed first by de Gaulle, then by Pompidou, and finally by Giscard could always count on France's fear of the unknown to stay in power. The great code word in French politics was "security." The center-right, the known quantity, offered it in abundance. By electing Mitterrand, the French were saying that they were no longer frightened by de Gaulle's old war cry, "*moi ou le chaos*," a phrase Giscard echoed repeatedly during his campaign. This time the voters were going to take the plunge and find out once and for all whether or not the left could govern without causing either massive social upheaval or political paralysis.

There are a number of similarities between the French election and the election of Ronald Reagan that help explain why Mitterrand won. First, like Jimmy Carter, Giscard was a thoroughly unpopular man by election day. His imperiousness, his regal tastes, his aloofness, the scandal that surrounded the diamond affair all took their toll. The post-election analyses indicated that there were thousands of French people whose economic interests would have been served by Giscard's reelection, but who couldn't bring themselves to vote for him because they abhorred him.

Second, like Reagan, Mitterrand geared his campaign toward one goal: to make himself seem a thoroughly reasonable, thoroughly unradical candidate. He wanted to show that, unlike the Communists, he was no bomb-thrower, and he didn't want to make radical changes in the society. Like Reagan he was vague about what he would do if elected. His campaign posters and television appearances sought to portray a man of calm, not of change—of "quiet strength," the posters said. By any objective measure Giscard "won" the debate that took place the Tuesday before the election. He was full of facts and figures, he was quicker on his feet, he seemed the more brilliant of the two men, and he put Mitterrand on the defensive with his accusations that the Socialists would not be able to obtain a parliamentary majority with which to govern. Yet objective measures didn't mean much in this debate because Mitterrand did precisely what he wanted. Like Reagan, he wanted to show the country that he was a responsible man, and he succeeded in doing that. Seven years ago the candidates' debate was the key to sealing Mitterrand's fate. This year it was just as instrumental in nailing down his victory.

Several other factors helped to determine the election's outcome. The peculiar politics of France played, for once, into the hands of the left. In French politics, the Communist party—which is rigidly pro-Soviet—has always been the loose cannon on the deck. The vast majority of the country does not want to let the

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Communists near the levers of power, and fear of Communists in government has always been a major reason for center-right success. To counter that fear, Mitterrand said repeatedly during his campaign that he would not have Communists in his cabinet; but throughout the first round of the election, it was hard to see how else he could form a governing coalition. For the Communists, though, the first round was a disaster of unprecedented proportions. They took only 15 percent, their lowest total since before World War II. After that, when Mitterrand said he could rule without them, people could see he might be right.

MEANWHILE, the right was in disarray. The neo-Gaullist, Jacques Chirac, who had done surprisingly well in the first round of the election (getting 18 percent of the vote), was stabbing Giscard in the back. His tough campaigning had hurt Giscard badly, and once he was out of the race his endorsements of the president's reelection were tepid. As a result, nearly 30 percent of the Chirac vote did not swing to Giscard. The day after the election Giscard accused Chirac of "premeditated treason."

The most important factor of all, however, was the state of the economy. Giscard, like Carter, was hoisted with the petard of his economic policy. But Giscard, unlike Carter, had an economic policy, and not a bad one at that. He believed that for France to become more productive and competitive, a measure of free enterprise was needed. Meanwhile, the government was taking an active role in supporting and strengthening those areas where it thought France could do well, in the Japanese manner. Under Giscard the standard of living in France rose, in real terms, more than 22 percent. But France, like the rest of the West, has had its share of economic difficulties: the usual combination of sluggish growth, rising inflation, lowered productivity, and high unemployment. Giscard's policies added fuel to the fire. By the time he was campaigning for reelection, unemployment had reached 1.6 million, up from 424,000 when he took office. Here, then, was the one true "issue" of the campaign, with each candidate clamoring to come up with the surer way of putting people back to work. Giscard's strategy was to say that increased growth would mean increased jobs. Mitterrand went much further, promising to add over 200,000 new public service jobs, to lower the retirement age, to shorten the work week to 35 hours, to salvage jobs by decreasing foreign imports. Mitterrand and the Socialists struck a chord in France, because what he was promising people was "security." It was a different kind of security than the kind the right has always promised, but security nonetheless: the security of a stable, lifelong, risk-free job, with regular pay increases and lots of vacation time.

Now that he has been elected, what will Mitterrand do? At first, probably not much. He will dissolve the assembly and call for new elections in an attempt to forge a left majority. In the interim he can do a few of the things he has promised: he can raise the minimum wage, increase social security benefits, and add to the many other welfare programs that exist in France. He can fiddle with government regulations that are already in place. Without an assembly he can also conduct foreign policy to his heart's content, since that is one domain over which the president of France has sole responsibility. Here is an area Americans need not be overly worried about—at least judging from Mitterrand's statements during the campaign. He was harshly critical of the Soviets (he scored a lot of points against Giscard by hammering away at the incumbent's record of coddling the Russians), all the while reaffirming his belief in the soundness of NATO. He will cause Reagan some problems—he is vigorously opposed to American involvement in El Salvador, for instance—but on the basic issues of Western security, he and the president will be compatible.

OTHERWISE, Mitterrand's hands are tied until (and unless) he gets his majority in the assembly. All of the Socialists' major proposals require assembly approval—the nationalization of ten key industries, the raising of taxes and establishment of a wealth tax, the creation of 200,000 more bureaucrats (in an already overbureaucratized country), the 35-hour work week. And those that aren't subject to assembly approval—things like increased protectionism and new currency controls—probably will need approval from the other members of the European community. If these proposals sound stale, it is because they are. Even though the right has been in power in France all these years, the battle has largely been won by the left. This is a country that has enacted many of the same kinds of social programs as, say, England, where the left has had plenty of chances to run the show. But the French left has to run on something—hence tired old hobby-horses like nationalization (which is a particularly specious proposal since in a country like France it has no economic justification). And if Mitterrand ever did get a chance to put his entire platform into practice—not just the nationalizations, but the protectionism and the salvaging of dying industries like textiles—the effect probably would be wildly inflationary. France is a country that has never worried much about inflation, partly because it has never seen the kind of inflation Germany has seen, and partly because everyone's salary is indexed. It will be hard for the French to remain unconcerned if Mitterrand gets his way.

But will he? That is the great guessing game going on in France right now. The daily papers are cranking out all the possibilities. Here's where the fun really begins: what will happen after the legislative elections Mitterrand has called for? What kind of government will there be? For France, this is entirely new ground, so one can only speculate. In the right-wing *Figaro*'s favorite scenario, Mitterrand fails to get a majority, cannot, under the Constitution, dissolve the assembly

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again for a year, and is thus rendered impotent. He can't name a prime minister because the assembly wouldn't approve his choice—so there is essentially no government. This would no doubt bring on a constitutional crisis. But that is far from the only possibility. Mitterrand might turn out to be so craven that he cuts a deal with the Communists. If he did so he would never be forgiven by the country. But in the meantime France would get seven years of Socialist-Communist rule. Or he might be able to forge a new center-right majority, by splintering off some of the left-leaning Giscardians. Or he might form an odd majority with the Gaullists. Or he might even get his own Socialist majority, which seems more and more possible these days, since Giscard and Chirac are feuding bitterly between themselves instead of joining forces to stop Mitterrand. *Que le spectacle commence!*

Joseph Nocera

Joseph Nocera, a contributing editor of the *Washington Monthly*, lives in Paris.

Doing good may no longer be enough.

Amnesty International at 20

by Anne Colamosca

In 1961 Peter Benenson, a London lawyer, became incensed at a story of the seven-year imprisonment of two Portuguese students whose crime had been to raise their glasses to liberty in a public place. As a former defense counsel for political prisoners in Hungary, South Africa, and Spain, Benenson had tired of the ineffectuality of individual protest. Instead, he wrote an article that was published simultaneously in London's *Observer* and Paris's *Le Monde*, appealing for an international crusade to abolish the imprisonment and torture of political dissenters. "The newspaper reader feels a sickening sense of impotence," Benenson wrote. "Yet if these feelings of disgust could be united into common action something effective could be done." The two pieces drew 1,000 letters of support. Within two months a movement had started in five countries. It was to become Amnesty International.

In the 20 years since then, Amnesty International has won a Nobel Peace Prize (1977), a quarter of a million members, and a deserved reputation as one of the world's few heartening examples of human beings acting together to do something concrete about tyranny and oppression. Amnesty's activities are intensified each year, and it succeeds in ameliorating the conditions of at least half of the political victims whose causes it takes up.

Amnesty's focus is still overwhelmingly on the individual prisoner. But today there are many inside the organization who want it to take on the additional task of attacking the causes as well as the results of official oppression. This would mean a more systemic—and, inevitably, a more "political"—approach. It would mean entering the arena where the national and international political decisions are made that result in wholesale violations of human rights. The advocates of this course are still a minority within AI. But they offer a strong challenge to Amnesty's entrenched belief that the organization's interests are best served by a pointedly apolitical, purely "humanitarian" stance.

Despite these internal rumblings, and despite the evidence in polls in the US and Europe which show a strong potential constituency for political action against human rights violators, the leaders of Amnesty have made a decision to limit their growth. Amnesty's national sections in Germany, the Netherlands, and France have tried to discourage new membership, and AI continues to maintain a relatively low profile in the United States, where no serious attempt has ever been made to tap the totality of potential support. This policy of membership containment in the developed world—when violence against political prisoners may be more concentrated than ever before—indicates that Amnesty faces some fundamental questions as it reaches its 20th anniversary on May 28.

"There has been a growing feeling of frustration among many people on the AI staff," one worker told this recent visitor to the organization's London headquarters. Amnesty staffers have watched as the same economic hard times that are raising torture levels in many places are also causing major governments to shrug off the issue of human rights. Ironically, as torture techniques become more sophisticated and goon squads murder people in the streets, leaders of developed nations increasingly seem to perceive human

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rights as existing outside the realm of realpolitik.

When one starts to sift through even a few Amnesty International prisoner profiles, it is easy to see why some AI members feel the organization must find new ways to increase its effectiveness. There are thousands of prisoners less fortunate than Argentina's Jacobo Timerman who do not have the world press lobbying for their causes: a Mexican worker stripped naked by police and given electric shocks to his testicles for weeks on end; a Turkish trade union lawyer who died of kidney and spleen damage after being tortured repeatedly by police; a Uruguayan political prisoner forced to straddle the sawhorse (*el caballete*), an iron bar that cuts deeply into the groin. George Orwell's assertion that the common people are inherently more decent than the elites who run their institutions is borne out by the evidence that masses of people want an increase in human rights activities, but their governments do not.

As it is now organized, Amnesty cannot exert influence on a mass scale. The adoption group, which is the backbone of its operation, still functions as it did 20 years ago. Although there are over 2,000 adoption groups today, each continues to take on very small caseloads. Three "prisoners of conscience" are assigned to each adoption group by researchers in the London secretariat. PCs, as they are known to Amnesty workers, are men and women who have been imprisoned for their political beliefs, color, ethnic origin, or religion. Each is carefully chosen after the London office works up a full dossier on his or her background and circumstances. Amnesty stipulates that no PC may have employed or advocated the use of violence and that every adoption group must work with prisoners from different ideological and geographical backgrounds. Each group adopts one PC each from a communist, Western, and third world nation. The group's members barrage the offending government with letters of protest until the prisoner is released.

Amnesty does not allow adoption groups to work for PCs in their own countries. It has felt that this might lead to a political prejudice in Amnesty's work. In effect, this long-observed policy has complemented AI's push to increase the numbers of adoption groups operating in the third world. Amnesty wants to counteract the image of well-heeled European and American do-gooders forcing their sense of morality upon third world governments. The plan is to have hundreds of third world adoption groups pressuring governments in places like West Germany, the Soviet Union, the US, and the East European bloc for better human rights policies. The Soviets have expressed strong objections to having the details of their prison systems discussed in third world circles and publications. And there is another, more practical, reason for this policy. A Paraguayan adoption group has a better chance of not being hauled into prison itself if it is not criticizing its country's national police problems. Therefore adoption groups never supply the London secretariat with information on local political prisoners.

Coming:

OPEC's American Auxiliary.

BECAUSE of the deep roots of the adoption group approach in the development of Amnesty, many members are touchy about criticism of it. But AI in-house newspapers indicate a high level of tension between the traditionalists and those who worry that sending letters is out of step with the increase in human rights violations throughout the world. Of a conservatively estimated half-million cases of political imprisonment around the world, Amnesty has taken up about one percent. Some London staffers worry too that because of this very selective method of choosing PCs, they are not able to help many who need it the most. Building a credible dossier on a potential PC means combing local press reports, prisoners' letters, and trial transcripts for information. These documents are hard to obtain unless the prisoner is linked to some kind of political, labor, business, or religious organization that is monitoring his condition. Those with the poorest access to such organizations—often the most illiterate and impoverished of the prisoners, held in miserable rural prisons—are the hardest to trace.

In many ways the research department at London headquarters has become the cutting edge of Amnesty innovation over the last few years. It has insisted upon hiring people with solid academic credentials to upgrade overall analysis of contemporary legal, political, and human rights policies in a given country. The research jobs are set up similarly to those of US State Department desk officers, with each researcher responsible for a particular geographical area.

From the outside it may look as though Amnesty researchers rely upon anonymous "tips" about political prisoners from wary midnight callers. Sometimes, in fact, it does work that way. (While visiting Amnesty I watched as a nervous East European in a long, bedraggled raincoat told a researcher through an intercom about some "highly confidential dossiers" he had in his suitcase. She invited him in to talk.) But Amnesty researchers mainly concentrate on what they call the intellectual "jigsaw puzzle" aspect of their jobs. Once they understand the backdrop of political activity in a country they can take these confidential dossiers and figure out where they fit into the puzzle.

David Braham, a tall ex-history professor in his 40s, taught in Spain for several years, and also spent some time in Italy. Now he runs the European desk at Amnesty. In addition to having a sophisticated understanding of contemporary politics and a good background in how terrorism works in Europe today, Braham also brought a detailed network of contacts to his job. Through human rights activists, priests, lawyers, and teachers, many of whom he knew while

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working in Southern Europe, he is tied into a huge network of information. Braham's work on behalf of Spanish PCs has been complicated by a new anti-terrorist law that allows police to hold prisoners seven extra days beyond the original three before they come to trial. "AI has information that shows police are giving harsh beatings to some political prisoners during the first three days they are held," says Braham. "By the time the ten days are up though, the bruises no longer show. The Spanish police are very sophisticated about not leaving permanent scars because there is a law against police brutality—and, depending on the judge, a policeman could be in serious trouble. In contrast,the legal systems in some South American countries do not always include such laws."

Today there are hundreds of applications for each research opening at Amnesty. Academics from all over the world are not deterred by a modest annual salary of $15,000 or by the long working hours. But as the intellectual core of the Amnesty organization has grown more sophisticated, the frustration seems to deepen. Even with all of these additional experts hard at work, the feeling among some researchers is that more could be done.

SOME changes have already occurred that go beyond the relatively narrow work of the adoption groups. In response to heightened violence and murders of many political prisoners during the 1970s, AI began to use a new techique it calls the Urgent Action Network. Through it, AI can quickly mobilize thousands of people to blitz an offending government with cables and telegrams for six weeks. To date about half of the prisoners have experienced an improvement in their situation as a result of the Network—about the same success ratio as for the adoption groups.

Amnesty has also recently shown a greater willingness to capture media attention for human rights issues. Recently it issued a carefully honed report on violations in Guatemala. That report was far more professionally prepared than most, and was promoted with a PR campaign worthy of Paramount Pictures. As a result it received worldwide coverage and the Guatemalan government sent an emissary to London complaining that his country was losing its tourist business because of the Amnesty busybodies. But Amnesty is wary of abusing its access to the press. As the Swede who serves as the organization's secretary general, Thomas Hammarberg, argues, "We cannot afford to be too trendy. If the press is all excited about Iran, we cannot switch all our resources to Iran."

Recently Amnesty has become slightly more politicized about one issue. AI now protests to a government if it provides training, expertise, or equipment that is expected to be used by a recipient government against prisoners of conscience. The British national section has asked its own government to investigate agreements by which British companies have licensed the production of torture instruments to repressive countries. Not surprisingly, the Thatcher government has refused the request for review, but the subject is being hotly debated in Britain. Similarly, the French national section has been investigating this issue of "linkage."

THESE ARE moves toward direct political action. Though limited, they are raising the issue of whether Amnesty should begin to demand boycotts by one country on relations with other countries that are violating human rights. And from there it would be only a small step toward demands for legislative actions and other vigorous government attempts to stamp out human rights violations around the world.

If Amnesty decided to take this step—for which there is considerable member support—the organization would undergo a radical change. The argument for more political action acknowledges that the level of violence against human rights has escalated and that Amnesty is not using its manifest strength. "I think most Amnesty members would say that things got somewhat better in the mid-1970s, but in the late 1970s and early 1980s they have become very bad again," says Hammarberg, "so that from our perspective we feel as though we have had a bad track record, or are not all that powerful. But it is very difficult to know what to do."

Any basic change in Amnesty's operation entails severe risks to an organization that has succeeded in alleviating the conditions of some 13,000 prisoners of conscience over the past 20 years. The major risk is an accusation that Amnesty is political in the sense of espousing a particular economic program, like democratic socialism, or in furthering the cause of some nation or group of nations. The Soviet Union is constantly attacking AI for being a tool of "imperialist" secret service agencies. The British government has been upset by Amnesty's revelations of torture in Northern Ireland by British forces.

Amnesty has been remarkably successful thus far in avoiding charges of bias, particularly left-wing or right-wing bias. In a 1974 *National Review* article George H. Nash demonstrated that there were many liberals on Amnesty's board of directors. There still are. But he could find no real evidence that Amnesty supported any economic doctrine or the interests of any nation. He would still have a hard time finding such evidence.

If Amnesty were to become more active the dangers of politicization obviously would increase. AI would have to risk spending some of the political capital it has earned through its humanitarian efforts over the years. A more militant, more visible organization would be a more tempting target for takeover or infiltration by those who would wish Amnesty to serve goals other than pure human rights. But if Amnesty International is to rally what is unquestionably a massive worldwide human rights constituency, these are risks that the organization must take.

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High on the Hog, I

The Mystery of the Free Lunch

by Michael Kinsley

President Reagan's inauguration was a landmark in the history of conspicuous consumption. It signaled the total rehabilitation of lavish extravagance after half a century when practices like sipping champagne in a limousine were in mild or severe disrepute. They had to pick the east coast clean to find enough limousines to satisfy the demand from people who had flown in from around the country, often in private planes, to attend more than 100 fancy parties, crowd into restaurants that charge $40 or more for a meal, and lay down their heads in triple-digit hotel rooms. The man from Ridgewell's, Washington's leading caterer, summarized the prevailing philosophy for a *Washington Post* party reporter: "Rather than shrimp salad, they want the whole shrimp."

When I read about people living this way, I often think it would be nice to do the same, and then I think it's unfair that some people can and others can't. Everything's relative, of course, and many might have the same thoughts if, for some reason, my lifestyle were chronicled in the newspapers. To me, these two reactions seem perfectly human and perfectly connected. But to conservatives they are very different. The first thought—I would like to live like that—is called "incentive," and is considered crucial to the proper functioning of a capitalist economy. The second thought—It's unfair that some can and others can't—is called "envy," and is considered a dangerous symptom of that political infection known as "egalitarianism" or, in Irving Kristol's phrase, "infantile liberalism."

The social role of rich people and lavish living is a topic that is much on the minds of conservatives these days, and plays an important part in Reagan's economic policies. George Will wrote recently:

> A society that wants to be extraordinarily productive and prosperous should resolve to ensure that those who produce extraordinarily also prosper extraordinarily. [That's "incentive."] Alas, an irrational and costly (especially to the non-rich) resentment of the rich [that's "envy"] has prevented implementation of sound policies, including substantial cuts in corporate taxes.

No longer. Reagan's tax plan involves massive cuts in corporate taxes and other changes frankly intended to make it easier to get rich and stay that way. These cuts are supposed to be so helpful to the non-rich that the least rich are being asked to accept "austerity" (the Reaganites' own word) to help pay for them.

Such thinking and such policies rest on many assumptions. Some are deep philosophical assumptions about things like the nature of human inequality. Some are technical economic assumptions about things like the incentive effects of tax rates. But one is a simple factual assumption: that in America today the greatest consumers of wealth are also the greatest producers of wealth. Both the moral case and the economic case for financial inequality—and the case against "envy" as a legitimate response to conspicuous luxury—rest on this assumption. High living is a reward for socially useful activity, and an encouragement for more of the same.

But you can admire the productive power of capitalism, and still wonder how much of the lavish consumption you see and read about is really financed by productive activities that benefit the general populace in the textbook manner. If it's not, then the case against "envy," or "infantile liberalism," or other unattractive labels for skepticism about the social value of financial inequality, becomes somewhat weaker.

Let's look again at the extravagance surrounding the Reagan inauguration, for example. One striking conclusion is that much of it—I would say most, but I can't prove that—was somebody's tax-deductible business expense. It is tempting to say that this means the average taxpayer was paying part of the freight (46 percent in the case of a corporation; up to 70 percent for a rich individual). But this sort of suggestion enrages conservatives. Irving Kristol complains in *Two Cheers for Capitalism*, in excited italics, that with such talk, "*You are implicitly asserting that all income . . . belongs of right to the government. . . .*" So let's just stay calm and agree that there are two kinds of money—Before Tax (BT) and After Tax (AT)—and that BT money buys a lot more goodies than AT money. Anyone who denies the reality of this distinction either hasn't experienced the joys of tax-free consumption (and I have spied Professor Kristol at more than one BT social occasion around Washington) or is lying.

A few weeks ago I had lunch with the editor of a rival publication I sometimes write for. It was a nice restaurant, a treat for both of us. He suggested we split the check. Instead, I paid the whole thing and will deduct it as a business expense ("lunch with customer, $25"). This will reduce my taxes by about the cost of his lunch. If (unlikely, but let's suppose) he picks up the check next time ("lunch with supplier, $25"), we will have lunched twice for the same cost as if we'd lunched once and split the check. Who is paying for that second lunch? I wouldn't presume to say. It must have something to do with supply-side economics.

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Reagan's inauguration can be seen as an elaborate round-robin version of the free lunch mystery, which has puzzled philosophers of accounting for centuries. For days the same people took turns entertaining one another while deducting the cost of the entertainment, the cost of getting there to provide it, the cost of staying to enjoy it, and so on. Many were corporate executives who passed on the pleasure of deducting the cost to their stockholders, and some were free-loaders with nothing to deduct. But what all shared was luxury paid for with BT money—money that had never passed through the tax system.

IN THE THREE days of January 19, 20, and 21 the *Washington Post* Style section had no fewer than 36 separate articles about different parties connected with the inauguration. By my conservative count, 14 of these were paid for entirely with BT money, two probably were BT, and another 11 were BT in large part. Only nine seem more likely to have been paid for with the kind of money you use for your night at the bowling alley. The "definitely BT" category includes affairs sponsored by corporations and trade associations such as a lavish brunch at the Four Seasons Hotel sponsored by NBC, a movie screening and champagne reception at the Motion Picture Association, and a modest cocktail party for 300 or 400 thrown by *The New Republic*. *Fortune* magazine ran a color photo essay featuring some of these functions under the title, "Business Goes to Washington." Ford chairman Phillip Caldwell (1980 losses: $1.5 billion) was quoted commenting with pleasure on the new mood Reagan had brought to Washington: "Hope feeds on itself, just as defeat feeds on itself." Caldwell, however, was feeding on poached steelhead salmon, or, in the other sense, was feeding on the Pepsi Cola Company. He did not feed on himself all week.

Another "definitely BT" affair was a "sumptuous" (said the *Post*) dinner given by Roy Cohn and his law partner at the Madison Hotel. Cohn, who is innocent of a variety of federal crimes, takes an "I dare you" attitude toward deductions. He told the *New York Times* recently that his firm pays him a salary of $75,000 to $100,000, but picks up (and deducts, I presume) $500,000 a year of his expenses, including houses in New York, Connecticut, and Acapulco.

In the "probably BT" category, there was a "Californians are Coming" party for 300 given by a California PR man named Peter Hannaford. A California PR man certainly would be entitled to deduct the opportunity to cultivate other prominent Californians, even though many of them were already his good friends.

The "partially BT" category includes events paid for by the inaugural committee itself, which was largely financed by tax-deductible contributions. For example, there was a "lavish buffet" at the State Department for VIPs to view the pre-inaugural fireworks. Tickets were sold for other inaugural events, such as the inaugural gala ($150 top) and dinner at the Kennedy Center ($500). It is common for companies to buy and dispense such tickets. Good for business, you know. As the inaugural chairman, Bob Gray, said between bites, "Guilt? . . . No, Lord, . . . I had a sign made for my desk today: 'No government money, all private enterprise.'"

In such a world, what is not deductible? Well, Clement Stone, the insurance tycoon, gave a party for 250 at the Georgetown Club, and I wouldn't want to assume that he deducted it, although he probably could. Not one inaugural week self-indulgence reported in the *Post* was totally without possibilities for creative accounting.

The 36 parties do not include the coffee and donuts served Wednesday morning at National Airport to those waiting for their private planes to take off. These were BT donuts, of course, supplied by the airport management to pacify angry private plane passengers delayed by the crush. Commercial passengers, equally delayed though not equally responsible, were free to purchase coffee and donuts, AT.

ALMOST ALL of the 305 private planes departing from National on January 21 were registered to corporations, according to forms on file at the airport. Two patterns predominate in these records. Planes owned by large corporations like General Motors and General Electric swooped in with just a pilot and co-pilot, loaded up with passengers, and took off almost immediately. Some corporations ran shuttle services. US Steel, for example, took off four times during the day. Smaller companies generally had brought in a small plane on January 17, the day the partying began, and parked it at the airport until returning home January 21. Thanks to a multibillion-dollar annual federal subsidy to private aviation, it costs four dollars to land a small plane at National Airport, and $6.50 a day to park it. Parking a car at National costs about the same.

Now, perhaps six people from the Dome Petroleum Company of Denver and six from the Mossbacher Products Company of Houston and eight from Harrah's Hotel of Reno, Nevada, had important business reasons to be in Washington that week, and perhaps all are allergic to commercial boarding passes. Or perhaps all the passengers (such as Bob Hope, who rode back to Palm Springs with the Spanos Construction Company) either reimbursed the company for their flights or plan to declare the value as income next April. If not, these flights amount to tax-free consumption. Other planes departing that day were registered to familiar and unfamiliar names such as the Reader's Digest (two planeloads), Mustang Gas Products of Oklahoma City, Dow Chemical (three), Hooker Chemical, the King Ranch, Gulf States Toyota of Houston, Caesar's World Inc., William Moss Properties of Dallas, Hoffman-LaRoche, Pillsbury, West Texas Marketing Corp. of Abilene, and so on.

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Puttin' on the Ritz

Style, elegance, grace, class, taste, and sophistication have come back to Washington, say Washingtonians who possess these traits—traits, it is claimed, that were reviled during the strange interlude of the Carter years. The Reagans and their minions have freed people who possess style, elegance, etc., from being, as the maître d' at the Jockey Club puts it, "prisoners in their own homes."

Now, this matter of style is tricky, especially when one tries to quantify it. It does seem to involve money. In fact, the more money one spends, the more style one is perceived to have by the recipients of the cash. But in talking to style arbiters about the differences in the recent administrations, one finds that the fundamental lesson of Washington style can be learned from watching Mister Rogers (even if he does wear a cardigan). Style means saying, "I like you. Won't you like me too?" Washington has become Mister Reagan's Neighborhood.

If one attaches importance to courting established Washington society, including the Congress and the media—and considering what happened to the Carter administration, one had better—then it is beyond question that the Carters, through aloofness, hostility, and naiveté, made some big mistakes. The Reagan administration, through a combination of personality and a mania to do just the opposite of whatever the Carter people did, has the rest of Washington in its embrace. As for bringing a new style to this city—well, it appears that socially the Carters were an aberration. The Reagans have reinstituted business as usual, enhanced with more show business and money than has been seen in a while. Because memories are short, people are acting as if there's never been anything like it.

The Reagans and their friends have reintroduced a long absent political category to the spectrum: limousine conservatism. According to Steve Hamilton, a driver for Dav-El limousine service, business has definitely picked up. "When Carter first got into office, some people we'd take to the White House said to drop them off a block away; they didn't want to appear ostentatious," he says. The limousine gridlock that marked the inauguration has not appreciably weakened.

One has to be careful, however, about overstating the change that has been visited upon the capital. Since many of the people who are now in power have been in Washington all along—at the law firms, think tanks, and trade associations—a certain continuity in style is assured.

After all, if Ed Meese has been spotted at Mel Krupin's (one of the boiled-beef successors to Duke Zeibert's), that doesn't mean Joe Califano and Zbigniew Brzezinski won't continue to get good tables. And if Maison Blanche—where lunch for two, including two glasses of wine, tax, and tip, comes to $50—is the in spot for White House aides Meese, Richard Allen, and Mike Deaver, that doesn't mean Califano and Brzezinski get seated in the lounge when they show up there, either.

It's the little things that make Washington happy: black tie, limousines, a combo. One can't help thinking if the Carters had only cared about these small comforts the way the Reagans seem to, if they hadn't been so aggressively cheap, their whole administration might have gone differently. "I only played once for the Carter White House," says society orchestra leader Howard Devron. "I don't offer my services for free. I have musicians to pay, and he expected free entertainment." He says the Reagan administration has returned decorum to the dance floor. "I don't see spangled jeans anymore. Now there's flowing chiffon and silks," he says. "It's gracious and dignified. There are no guys with chains. No, 'Hey baby, how ya doing?'"

And the music? "The Carter people used to say, 'Lay it down.' The Reagan people request a lot of show tunes. They don't want loud rock. They like Glenn Miller. But it's not all old-fashioned. I play, 'Just the Way You Are,' by Billy Joel. And everything's not the businessman's bounce. They're very knowledgeable about ballroom dancing, as opposed to three years ago when they were struggling with ball-

The inauguration festivities were not unique. Read the papers for a few days with the BT/AT distinction in mind, and you will realize that most of the visible high living that goes on in this country is paid for with money that has never been taxed. Almost all the gatherings of show-business celebrities that fill the "People" or "Personalities" section are somebody's tax-deductible business expense—a movie company or a PR person or a theatrical producer. The same is true of many executive pastimes reported in business publications. A recent *Wall Street Journal* article on the demand for tickets to the Masters golf tournament reported, "On the weekend before the tournament, corporate executives start arriving in their private jets and, clients in tow, head for rented condominiums and a week of golf and business palaver." Another group with a rewarding BT lifestyle is journalists. They lunch with sources, travel on assignments, assemble regularly for mawkish BT celebrations of their trade, and are wined and dined at social occasions where their very presence is what makes the affair a tax-deductible business expense for their host.

A growing opportunity for tax-free high living is, of all things, charity and, in particular, corporate contributions to the arts. Two consulting firms in Washington alone specialize in lining up corporate sponsors for artistic groups or events, then staging elaborate parties to celebrate the connection. Corporate executives and their entourages fly in for the occasion and invite friends, politicians, journalists, and so on to wine and dine and hear speeches about private enterprise and culture. It's all BT. The cost of such a do is about $100 to $125 a person for "medium-level" food, wine, booze, waiters, flowers, guards, fees for the use of one of Washington's ceremonial buildings, and so on. A "nice" cocktail reception can be done for only $25 to $50 a person. Masterpiece Theater is made possible by a grant from Mobil Oil Corporation, but the frequent trips to England by Mobil's culture vultures to chat up BBC executives, view videotapes in screening rooms,

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room dancing. I get the Latin dances requested, the tango and the rumba."

Three hours and six musicians will set a party-giver back $600. If Devron's presence is requested, the price is negotiated accordingly. "I can't be everywhere," he explains. His rates go up for personal appearances, he says, "because [my customers] hate to see me on an engagement unless I charge a lot of money. I've learned to please my customers." Howard Devron hits upon an essential point in this matter of style. Since the naked fact of expensiveness does not necessarily guarantee quality—is a meal at Maison Blanche really ten times better than at Scholl's Cafeteria because it's ten times more expensive?—the function of a stylish price seems to be to offer reassurance to people worried about the success of their parties.

Those who were put off by the stylish prices, the ostentation, and the snobbishness that characterized the inaugural just weren't seeing the real picture, Reagan fans assert. "They're so nice, so normal," says *Washington Star* society columnist Betty Beale. "They have such an easy rapport . . . it's like talking to your next-door neighbor." Your next-door neighbor? "Well, not if you live in a tenement. I'm talking about society."

Society people say that the question of snobbishness is one that must be put in perspective. James and Dolley Madison used to set the standard of style in the capital; now the president and first lady are most often measured against the Kennedys. They say that Nancy Reagan comes closer than any first lady to matching Jackie's flair, but that the Reagans lack the hauteur of the Kennedys. (One former Carter staffer says Rosalynn could never understand why people made such a fuss about Amy reading at the table at state dinners. After all, people loved Caroline and John-John so.)

"It didn't really matter how you dressed during the Carter years. Now there's a little more competition. You get your hair done, wear nice things," says Ina Ginsberg, a well-known hostess. "But it's not like the Kennedy administration, with people going every day to get their hair combed out . . . and people won't be thrown in swimming pools during this administration." Betty Beale recalls that the Kennedys had private parties after their official parties. "And those who weren't invited to the private parties were not in, and if you were not in, you were out," she says. "There was a snobbishness to the Kennedys."

If anyone needs proof that the Reagans are devoid of snobbery, one need only look at the guest list of the recent dinner for Prince Charles. When was the last time you invited the help to a swank dinner party? But there they were, right next to the William Buckleys, the Alfred Bloomingdales, and the Paul Mellons: decorator Ted Graber, designer James Galanos, and rich ladies' escort Jerome Zipkin, whose official *Women's Wear Daily* nickname, after he began giving interviews about Mrs. Reagan and the other ladies, changed from "the social moth" to "the social mouth." If the purpose of the guest list was to show off the cream of Reagan's acquaintances, then Cary Grant and Audrey Hepburn make some sense. But onetime Charlie's Angel Shelley Hack? Don't the Reagans know any writers (other than Buckley), artists, scientists, or even politicians? Also in attendance was the chief of protocol with the trick knee, Lenore Annenberg. In defense of Mrs. Annenberg's desire to become a British subject, it must be said that Republicans apparently have a hard time sorting out their feelings about royalty. It wasn't all that long ago that the late Martha Mitchell got her share of derision for *not* curtsying when presented to Queen Elizabeth.

Although everyone who counts in Washington is now having a ball, hostess Ginsberg warns it should be enjoyed while it lasts. "In this town, over the years, others have started out as well, then some crisis occurs, and people feel [all the partying] is not quite the right thing," she says. "This town is subject to what happens in the world. LBJ threw marvelous parties at the White House with music and dancing. Suddenly, some congressman gives a speech on the floor saying, 'Our boys are dying, and he dances until two in the morning.'" Apparently sooner or later, even in the most stylish administrations, the party's over.

Emily Yoffe

and see what's new on the London stage are made possible by BT bucks.

Most industries in what might be called the luxury sector of the economy are deeply dependent on untaxed money. Of the consumer items associated with high living, only wearables—clothes, furs, and jewels—are really rarely paid for with BT money. (Though even here, the *Wall Street Journal* has reported an arrangement whereby corporations lease business suits for their executives.) Relatively little luxury housing gets written off as a business expense. However, "business" apartments are quite common in resort communities and major cities here and abroad; and how to get deductions for second homes is a perennial topic in tax advice publications. Similarly, most luxury cars probably are paid for AT, but many self-employed professionals and small-business men manage to write off hefty chunks of their Cadillacs and Mercedeses, and top corporate executives often get company cars or limousines.

At the opposite extreme are luxury restaurants, almost all of which would fold if they had to rely on AT customers. In a city like Washington, 80 to 90 percent of the lunch crowd and perhaps half the dinner crowd at top restaurants is eating on "business." This is an unscientific estimate, but experienced Washington trencherpersons don't challenge it.

The travel industry—airlines, hotels, resorts—is only somewhat less dependent than restaurants on tax-deductible customers. As with restaurants, the fancier the circumstances, the more likely the money is BT. According to the Air Transport Association, 55 percent of commercial air travel was for business purposes in 1979, up from 46 percent in 1973. Some of this represents traveling salesmen or computer engineers off to training sessions in Topeka, but much of it is doctors and lawyers heading for conventions in Hawaii and corporate executives attending conferences at the Greenbriar. The airlines won't say whether business is more heavily represented in first class or coach, but the

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question answers itself. The hotel industry has been developing its own equivalent of "first class" in recent years—a special section of rooms with extra services like little chocolate bars on the pillow at night. The newly opened Marriott in downtown Washington charges $30 extra a night (about $125 for a double room) for its "Concierge Level." According to the *Wall Street Journal*, "Hotels say the bulk of luxury customers are on expense accounts." Surprise, surprise.

The Hyatt Hotel Corporation advertises as follows in the February issue of an airline magazine:

> FOR YOUR NEXT BUSINESS MEETING
>
> Lake Tahoe the way it was . . . and still is, 460 newly appointed rooms and suites on the North Shore, plus a Regency Club Level with Concierge and a special touch of Hyatt.
>
> 2 nearby Robert Trent Jones golf courses and 26 tennis courts close to the hotel. Our own beach for swimming, water skiing and water sports. A heated pool. 6 nearby ski areas, cross country skiing and snowmobiling. Indoor and Outdoor Theme Parties. . . .

Hyatt's notion of a "business meeting" is useful in interpreting another ad Hyatt placed in February, this one in the *New York Times*, celebrating President Reagan's economic program:

> There's a new spirit in America. The nation is charged with a strong new determination; ready to go to work and spur the growth of a new prosperity.
>
> It's back to business. . . .

Business? What do Indoor and Outdoor Theme Parties have to do with business? Where does the enormous amount of lavish living that goes on free of taxation, much of it existing only for that reason, fit into the prevailing mythology that we need to worry less about the have-nots and more about the haves in order to rebuild the economy? There is a conceptual trap awaiting inequality buffs here. If such luxury is considered compensation for services rendered, to specific businesses and to general prosperity, then the money that pays for it should be subject to tax like all other compensation. We can argue about the proper tax *rate*, as of course we are doing these days, but even the Laffer Curve recognizes that a tax rate of zero is not fiscally sound.

FEARFUL of this logic, connoisseurs of the BT high life tend to portray themselves as characters in a Buñuel movie, dragging from one lavish event to the next and deriving no pleasure at all from the constant travel, socializing, fancy dining, and so on they are forced to endure as part of their contribution to the economy. The *Wall Street Journal* tax column recently told of a Santa Monica surgeon who deducted $2,533 in expenses connected with playing golf twice a week at his country club. He claimed that golf was "a chore" that he endured in order to cultivate patients and other doctors. The tax court denied the deduction, but only because he had insufficient records.

"Business" high living, therefore, cannot be regarded as an appropriate reward and necessary incentive for productive activity. So what is its social value? Let us not be so unfashionable as to reintroduce here the fundamental question of fairness—why the people who can most easily afford luxury anyway get so much of it tax-free, while more modest lifestyles are paid for with post-tax money. Instead, let us consider the problem from a strictly supply-side point of view. From this perspective, favored tax treatment for "business" luxury has three defects.

FIRST, it encourages consumption over productive investment, at a time when the nation requires the opposite priority. Should Pickaname Corporation spend $100,000 on modernizing its rusty plant, or on a lavish weekend at the Superbowl for Mr. Pickaname and some "clients"? Ordinarily the government doesn't try to second-guess businesses about how they spend their money, figuring that they know best how to maximize their profits, and therefore the government's tax take. But Mr. Pickaname is not likely to make a cool and rational business decision here if one option will let him stage a grand exercise in hospitality at about half of what it would otherwise cost him. If Mr. Pickaname has passed from the scene, and his firm is now run by professional executives, their preference for the Superbowl weekend is likely to be even more pronounced, since it won't cost them anything at all. Furthermore, even when "investing" in lavish entertainment is a sound decision for an individual business, it rarely brings any return for the economy as a whole. At best, competitive orgies of consumption merely redirect demand; they do not create new supply.

Second, tax-free "business" consumption is inflationary. A customer who is paying only about half the cost (if he deducts it), or none of it at all (if she's on expense-account) is not going to be as sensitive to prices as people who have to pay with their own after-tax money. By any standard, the value-for-money ratio at establishments that cater primarily to business customers is lower than at places where most people pay their own way. The cost of a fancy meal or top hotel room has outpaced most consumer prices in recent years, whereas restaurant meals in general, for example, have lagged behind.

Third, business consumption deductions reduce tax revenues—about three billion dollars a year for meals alone. This money could be used to cut marginal tax rates or to reduce the federal deficit, the two key conservative economic nostrums. Of course the money could also be used in other ways. The Congressional Black Caucus has proposed making restaurant meals only half-deductible, and using the money to restore Reagan's cuts in spending for child nutrition. But I suppose that suggestion smacks of envy.

Periodic crackdown attempts over two decades have added verses of sonorously forbidding language to the statute and regulation books. In practice, though,

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almost any sort of self-indulgence remains deductible. For example, the regulations state quite sternly that for a social occasion to be deductible, the "active conduct of business" must be the "principal aspect" of the occasion. The atmosphere must be "conducive to a business discussion." But read on. "Principal aspect," it develops, does not mean more than half of the time. And social occasions of any sort are deductible if they are "preceding or following a substantial business discussion." So are meals while traveling on business, and almost anything to do with a convention, and on and on.

And how about this passage from the IRS regulations for taking away with one hand and giving back with the other?

> 41. Question: Are there limitations on deductions for entertainment expenditures which are lavish or extravagant?
> Answer: Yes. To the extent that the expenditure is lavish or extravagant it is not allowable as a deduction.
> 42. Question: Will entertainment expenses be subject to disallowance on grounds of being lavish or extravagant merely because they exceed a fixed dollar amount or are incurred at deluxe restaurants, hotels, night clubs and resort establishments?
> Answer: No. An expense for entertainment will not be considered lavish or extravagant merely because it includes first class accommodations or services. An expense which, considering the facts and circumstances, is reasonable will not be considered lavish or extravagant.

THE MOST complex rules surround the recondite question of deducting club dues. Business use of the club must be computed two different ways, one to determine whether the dues are deductible at all, and the other to determine how much. This can be a nuisance, but it isn't much of a limitation. Unofficial tax guides contain pages of hints like this:

> Make a point of having a quiet business lunch on the same day as you play golf. That makes it a directly related day. ANOTHER POINT: a few drinks . . . at the bar can also transform a casual golf date into a full-fledged business day.

The rules for writing off yachts and hunting lodges used to be the same as for club dues. But the only crackdown that survived from President Carter's "three martini lunch" campaign (besides a restriction on foreign conventions that was mainly for the benefit of the US tourist industry) was a new rule disallowing all deductions for fun-and-games "facilities." Even here, however, there is an exception for "out-of-pocket costs" of entertaining at such facilities. In the case of hunting lodges, this includes the guides, the dogs, the guns, the bullets, the food, the booze, the loose women, the private planes to get there—in short, almost everything except the roof.

Even under present rules, with their loopholes and self-immolating limitations, the IRS estimates that 20 percent of all entertainment and travel deductions people take are illegitimate. The problem is not that the rules are too lax or that they're not enforced, but that such rules are conceptually unenforceable. How long must angels talk business before they can deduct the cost of going out dancing on the head of a pin? Faced with meaningless concepts like "principal aspect," impossible demands for precision in apportioning life's moments between business and pleasure, and restrictions on what counts as "business" that only a clairvoyant could supervise, taxpayers naturally treat themselves generously. The IRS, boxed in by the statute and by limited enforcement resources, is powerless to prevent billions of dollars a year of the most superfluous consumption from being subsidized by the taxpayers. (Sorry Mr. Kristol, that just popped out.)

MONEY spent on meals, parties, sports tickets, vacations, and lavish living in general should not escape taxation. Permitting so much of it to do so is both bad for the economy and, just by the way, terribly unfair. A few very simple and easily enforceable rules would solve the problem. Expenditures for food and entertainment should not be deductible unless they are also reported as taxable income to the recipients. Deductions for business travel should be limited to some modest but not spartan standard, such as coach air fare plus the daily allowance the government sets for its own employees. One or two conventions a year should be all that is considered necessary for fraternal comity within the professions.

There are three standard objections to proposals like these. One is that jobs in the luxury industries would be sacrificed. The answer is that subsidizing extravagant consumption by the already prosperous is a silly and costly way to create jobs for the deprived. A second objection is that some truly legitimate and necessary business spending would be caught unfairly in the tax maw. The answer is, not much, not nearly so much as the properly taxable consumption that now escapes, and not the kind that really contributes to national prosperity. A third objection is that defining consumption is an impossible task, and cracking down on only certain kinds is unfair. Should executives be taxed on offices beyond a certain size, or carpet above a certain thickness? Should doctors have to declare the value of their satisfaction at saving lives or their status in the community? The simplest answer to this is that the people who enjoy these inchoate forms of business income are the same ones who have been deducting the more material gratifications of their caste. Starting to tax just one category of income of this sort makes the tax code more fair, not less fair.

If people still wished to live high on the hog, they would be free to do so. Relieved of the need to pretend that they're not enjoying it, they could instead reflect that this was their just reward for their contribution to society, as accurately measured by a free market economic system. Whether this reflection would have any basis in fact is a question for another day.

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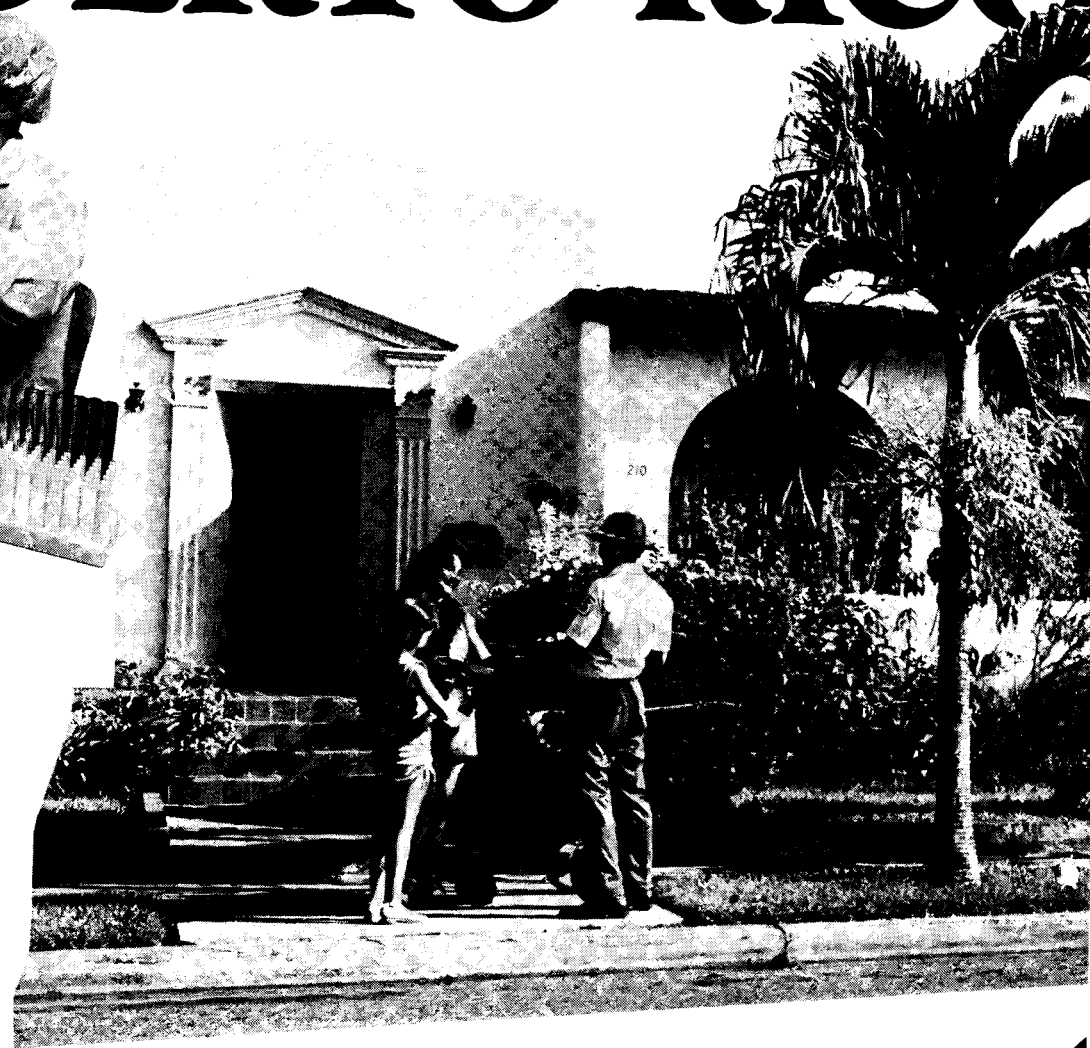

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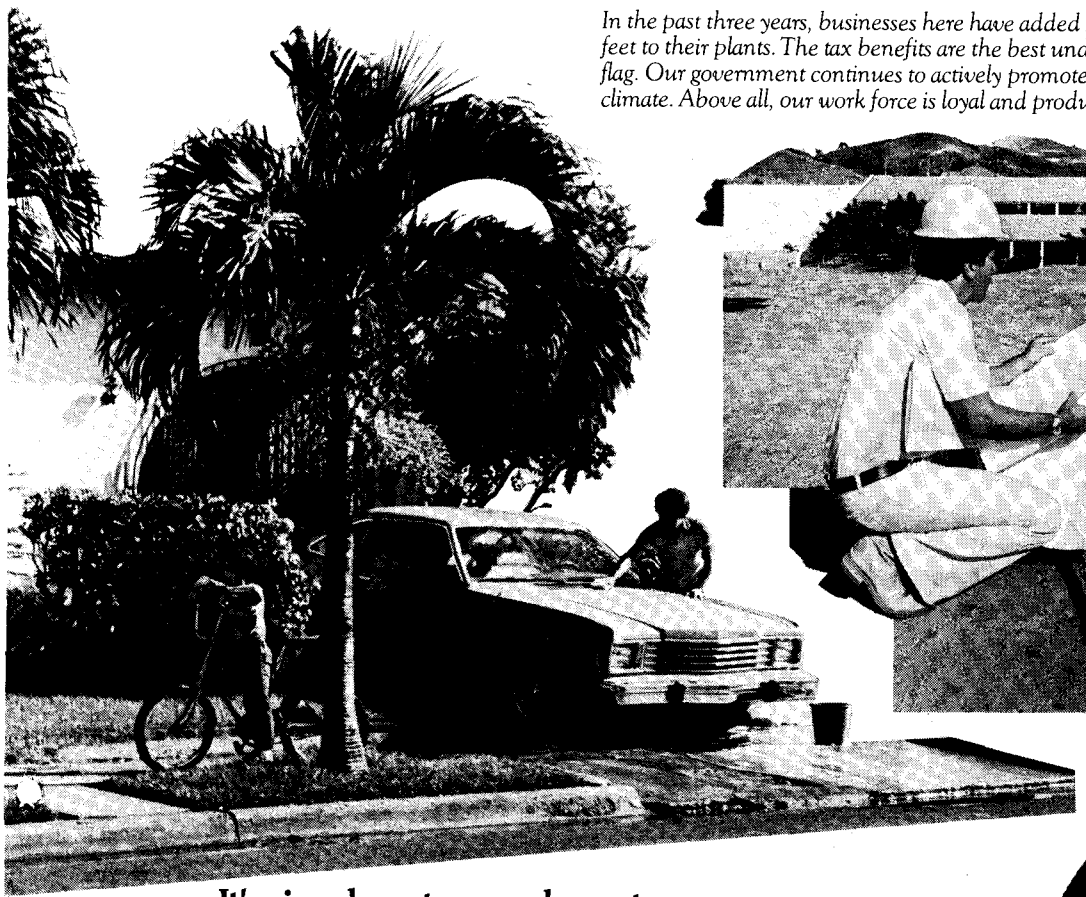

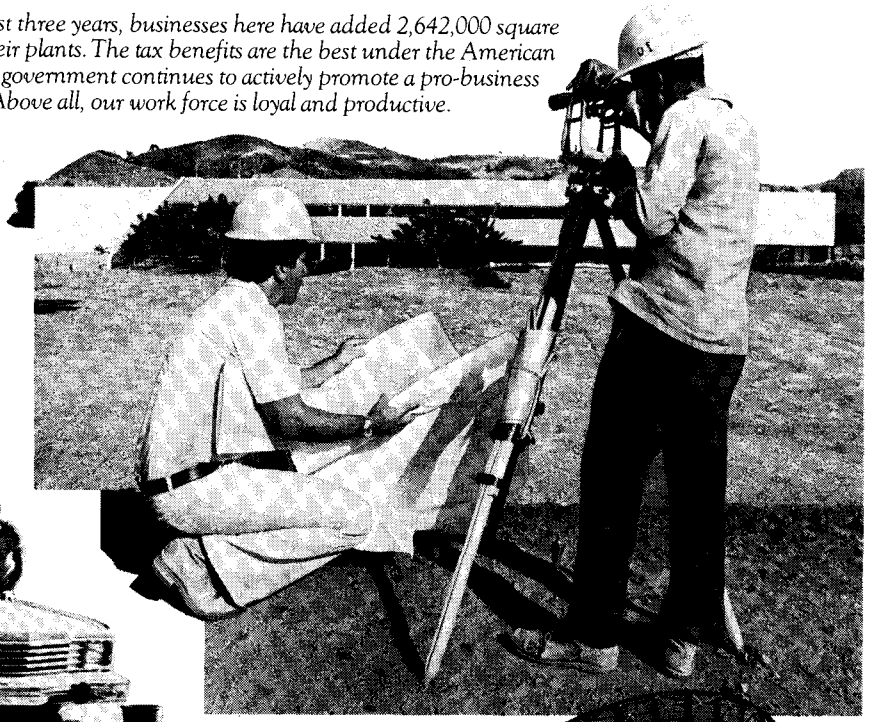

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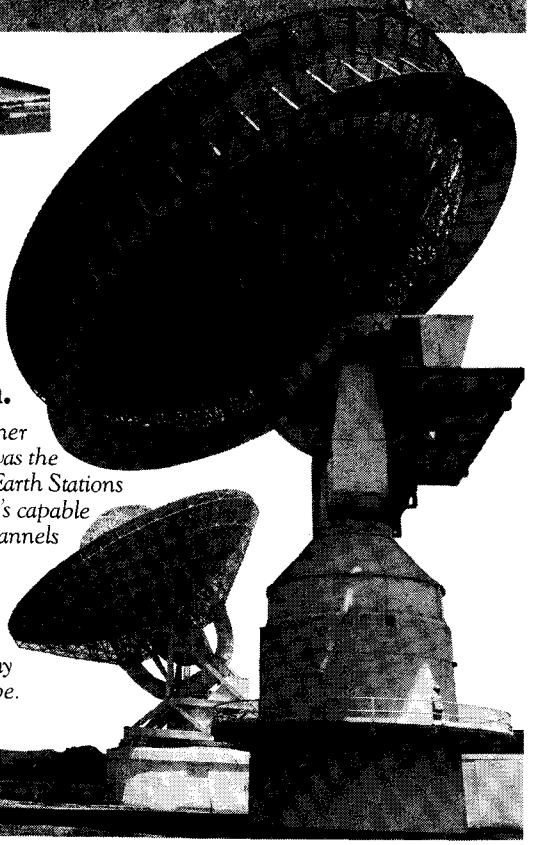

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Spring Roundup

Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears. Moscow does not believe in good color photography, either. Or in stories with one whiff of originality.

In this two-and-a-half-hour chunk of Soviet salami, three girls come up from the country to Moscow in 1958 and meet in a workers' dorm. Believe it or not, they are three different types of girls who proceed to have different sorts of lives. One is simple, marries a simple man, is happy simply. One is flirtatious and mischievous but basically good-hearted and has little adventures. The third, the central character, is serious, lovely, humane but not without a touch of humor. (I'm not going too fast for you to follow?)

Well, 20 years pass. (And I felt it.) Number Three, played by Vera Alentova, a good actress who resembles Jeanne Moreau, is now the director of a factory and has an illegitimate teenage daughter, the result of one escapade. Along comes a man of Alentova's age, an experienced, no-nonsense, mature, affectionate type, played by Alexei Batalov, the excellent leading man of that Soviet treasure *Lady with a Dog*. Batalov becomes a father-figure to the daughter and wins the mother. Two mature people, both a bit battered, find happiness together. The stories of the two other woman friends are also tied up neatly.

It's a standard studio film of the high Hollywood days, done with considerably less grace than most of its US antecedents but with some good actors. Like those antecedents, Mosfilm Studios have used this picture as a showcase for styles of contemporary living: furnishings, clothes, kitchens, cars, etc. The idea of Moscow luxe in 1978 is a bit more depressing than 1958 which, to be sure, was fairly soon after the war. The only perversely cheery note in the picture is that, in a 1978 scene, some street toughs attack a nice boy. The facts about Soviet street hoodlums are not news, of course, but it was refreshing to see them acknowledged in a film.

If anyone asks why this picture won the Oscar as best foreign picture of the year—over *Kagemusha*, for instance—I can only reply that this makes No. 1,322 on a list of unanswerable questions about the Oscars.

The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter. Another of the American independent films being handled by First Run Features (like *Gal Young Un*). This 65-minute documentary by Connie Field is about the women who went into jobs, in light and heavy industry, during World War II to replace the men who had left for the armed services. The propaganda had two main themes: you women are needed to help win the war, and you won't be kept in the jobs when the men come back—you can go home again to being wives and mothers. This pull-push line was frank from the beginning and was apparently a reassurance to many women, both because they thought it guaranteed jobs to returning servicemen and because they wouldn't be trapped in "unwomanly" lives.

Field's idea, simple and successful, was to combine clips from propaganda recruitment films of the day with present-day interviews of women who had jobs during the war but were booted out afterward. Her best achievement—crucial to the film—was to get the right subjects for interviews. Field found five women, two white and three black, all of them articulate, frank, vivid. I responded particularly to Gladys Belcher, the white Missouri farm woman who went from plowing to welding, who succeeded just on old-fashioned countrywoman grit; Lyn Childs, a black woman of exceptional dignity and charm, who speaks of what the war cost her in separation from the small daughter she couldn't take to California with her and the way she was shunted out of skilled jobs at the war's end; and Lola Weixel, a Brooklyn Jewish woman who is a fount of funny, sharp, moving eloquence. All five of Field's subjects dislike the way they were taken seriously as workers, as professionals, only for the duration.

Field did a good enough job of assembly and pacing. But the ironies of those plastic-looking corny propaganda clips are facile today. It's the five "stars" who make the film.

Just a Gigolo. A couple of months ago I read an article by Stephen Farber in which he detailed facts about long-unreleased films—finished pictures, many of them with famous stars and/or directors, that could not find distributors. This was one of them, and now it's released. I thought it odd that a picture with Marlene Dietrich and David Bowie couldn't get a distributor—it also has David Hemmings (of *Blow-Up*), Kim Novak, Maria Schell, and Curt Jurgens, and Hemmings directed—but the picture itself explains why. This sleeping dog should have been let lie.

It's set in Berlin right after World War I, so it's Very Depraved. It's also very slow, very badly dubbed, very predictable, very badly acted. In fact, there's more depravity in its making than its subject. Bowie is a young Prussian officer who is missing in action, then

Films Worth Seeing

Gal Young Un. Florida, 1920s, bootlegging. Exceptionally well acted "independent" film, directed by Victor Nuñez with understanding of character and milieu.

Joe and Maxi. Maxi Cohen made this documentary about the last days of her father, Joe. Rough, engaging, unsyrupy, socially revealing.

Lion of the Desert. Libya, 1920s. Strong action spectacle of Arab resistance to brutal Italian conquest. Anthony Quinn stalwart as (factually accurate) old Bedouin leader.

Oblomov. Goncharov's great novel gets somewhat restructured but essentially empathic treatment from Soviet filmmakers.

SK

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comes home and is missing in inaction. After he goes through one more tour (for us) of Berlin postwar conditions, he ends up as one of a stud stable run by a countess played by Marlene Dietrich. She is photographed with more care than she took in choosing the role: soft lighting, veils, long gowns with high necks and long sleeves, gloves. She sits except when she stands to sing "Just a Gigolo," though why this entrepreneuse should sing that song is obscure.

Kim Novak is a rich lascivious widow, voiceless as ever. Maria Schell is Bowie's mother, complete with her sugary smile. (I always feel that if I watch Schell's smile too long, my teeth will rot.) A large role is played by (Ms.) Sydne Rome who played the title role in Polanski's *What?* and has not improved.

As in Bergman's *The Serpent's Egg*, the Nazis are forecast throughout, together with their homosexual components. Bergman's film was one of his worst; since it's the first Hemmings direction I've seen, I can't place *Gigolo* on his torpor scale except that it's hard to imagine a decline. I did admire the all-white "tails," shot through with golden threads, that Jurgens wore at his wedding. The suit must have cost $2,000 to $3,000. I hope Jurgens got to keep it.

Second-Hand Hearts. Another of the films cited in Farber's article. Hollywood isn't *always* wrong. The making of this film was a mistake, but the decision to keep it in the can was not. They should have quit while they were behind.

Hal Ashby, who once directed a good film, *The Last Detail*, and has since blundered variously in *Shampoo*, *Bound for Glory*, *Coming Home*, and *Being There*, is responsible for this one. In addition to its intrinsic faults, *Hearts* suffers from being released so soon after *Back Roads*: after delaying *Hearts*, they then picked an especially poor time to release it. *Roads* was Martin Ritt's bummer about a tart and a boxer hitting the road from Mobile to California. *Hearts* is about a sixth-rate club chanteuse and a quasi-moronic car-washer hitting the road from Texas to California. A difference is that these two are unmarried (though unbedded) and that she has three small children by a previous (evidently bedded) marriage.

The script is by Charles Eastman, who wrote and directed *The All-American Boy*, one of the worst permissive messes of the 1970s. The idea of *Hearts* is that if you just let common folk wallow around in their commonness, their junk food and junk clothes and junk lives and junk pleasures, especially if they have southern accents of some kind, you not only strike a blow against the strictures of formulaic filmmaking, you not only provide a glimpse of the *real* America (the fake America presumably being the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton), you inevitably show how good-hearted and true the common people basically are. Virtue resides in vulgarity and sentimentality, and this is the third picture in a year to tell us so. (Besides *Roads*, there was *Melvin and Howard*.)

Robert Blake is notably loathsome in any case, but that case is helped along here by his painfully self-conscious groping to do things right. (His best appearance may have been as the boy who sold Bogart the lottery ticket in *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*.) Barbara Harris, the chanteuse, continues to prove that there is such a thing as bad luck. Harris is what Tuesday Weld is said to be: an extraordinarily gifted actress who doesn't get the parts she deserves. It would be high-handed to blame Harris for taking this role; after a while of waiting, work is work, even to a star. But I hope the cards change for her soon.

Robert Brustein on theater

The Limits of Realism

I've long had a prejudice against domestic realism, partly because its language tends to be gray and its subject matter puny, partly because its formal ambitions are so limited, partly because its feats of verisimilitude are more convincingly achieved in the movies. "To create, today," wrote Camus, "is to create dangerously," but most domestic plays come with built-in safety belts, engineered to protect against all crashes into the unknown. Now this is admittedly a narrow position to take, considering that realistic drama has always represented the mainstream of American theater; it is also an inconsistent one, considering how much I admire the family plays of Ibsen and Chekhov, not to mention what is perhaps the finest modern example of the genre, O'Neill's *A Long Day's Journey Into Night*. In the past, I've usually tried to defend my prejudice by referring to the poetic and metaphorical—i.e., *dangerous*—depths in the realistic plays I like, but this may be just another way of verifying a personal predisposition. After seeing two recent examples of American realism, I am prepared to offer another standard of value, though one that may be equally subjective: how well such plays fulfill their own criteria of authenticity.

For the fact is that most plays using realistic conventions are actually disguised romances, which exploit the appearance of reality in order to manipulate the audience into accepting contrivances as truths. The most obvious example of this is soap opera, where recognizable family "problems" serve as pretexts for superficial insights and facile resolutions. The same problems one finds in *As The World Turns* may also appear in *Ghosts*; the difference is that Ibsen uses the blighted family as a microcosm for a blighted society and a blighted universe, resolutely refusing to falsify the issues that divide his characters. Mrs. Alving may have discovered the cause of Oswald's malaise, but that doesn't mean she can cure it. Her son's "problem" represents more than an individual hang-up; it is the nexus of the combined errors of many benighted generations.

Lanford Wilson's plays are too sophisticated to be described as soap operas, but he has not been adverse, lately, to using fabric softeners and detergents to eliminate any wrinkles or rings around the collar. It's not hard to see how *The HOT L BALTIMORE* ended up as a TV series; his blend of "memorable" characters, witty dialogue, charged climaxes, comic exit lines, and happy endings adds up to pretty much the kind of fare that can be easily ingested with a take-out pizza and a bottle of beer. In his off-Broadway days, Lanford Wilson used to sound like Tennessee Williams; on Broadway, he has come more to resemble William Inge. His work still starts out with some edge, but it usually ends up romanticized, softened, domesticated—the dark at the top of the stairs illuminated with a rose-colored

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light bulb. *The Fifth of July* (New Apollo Theater) is currently being acclaimed as a significant new American play; to me it is significant largely for what it reveals about the kind of transactions now being made between talented playwrights and conservative audiences. Wilson has turned into a very shrewd technician—Peter Shaffer minus the literary syllabus—who has learned how to introduce homosexual relationships, seedy revelations, bold language, and raunchy situations in a manner calculated to offend no one. The play is a mild enough commodity—so is *Talley's Folly* to which, as a sequel, it bears more than a family relationship—but both works show us a potentially powerful playwright in the process of transforming himself into an entertainment machine.

In *The Fifth of July*, Matt Friedman has died and his widow, Sally Talley Friedman, is preparing to scatter his ashes over the grounds of the Talley estate. The complication is that the estate may be up for sale, since her homosexual nephew, Kenneth Talley Jr., who lost his legs as a result of a wound inflicted in Vietnam, has turned off high school teaching and is now considering a permanent vacation with his boyfriend, the gardener. These two take every opportunity to make love. So does the potential buyer, a former copper queen, now an aspiring pop singer, who snorts cocaine and pops Quaaludes, when she is not in the sack with her raffish husband, John. Other characters include June Talley, a former antiwar militant, and her illegitimate daughter, Shirley Talley, a teenager whose eccentric mannerisms extend to swooning whenever she hears an obscene word (she swoons rather often). After allowing these characters to caper about for two acts, Wilson sands down what there is of the plot: Shirley Talley turns out to be the daughter of Larry, the pop singer's husband; Sally reveals that she has saved the estate for the family by buying it herself; and Kenneth is inspired to stay in town to teach the kids. The final moments are reserved for the adolescent Shirley who promises to keep the family flag aloft ("It's on my shoulders, I won't fail us"), no doubt in preparation for her appearance as the heroine of the next episode—before the whole series is packaged for TV.

The Fifth of July, cleverly acted and directed for maximum comic effect, is a kind of *Cherry Orchard* for the tourist trade. Since it seems to amuse audiences, I hope it has a long run for their sake. But the play is trivial, and its realistic devices—including a full-scale St. Louis mansion designed by John Lee Beatty—are merely pretexts to disguise the superficiality of the characters and the artificiality of the anecdote.

Woody Allen is a newcomer to realism, which seems to be another stage in his development as a literary impersonator. Hitherto we have seen Woody Allen trapped inside a novel by Tolstoy, Woody Allen sequestered within a movie by Bergman; now we have Woody Allen entombed in a play by Tennessee Williams. The Jewish talent for impersonation may be linked to Jewish survival (imitation being the pathway to assimilation). But whereas Norman Mailer seriously believes himself to be Ernest Hemingway and Arthur Miller confuses himself with Henrik Ibsen, Woody Allen has usually maintained a satiric distance between himself and the objects of his mimetic gifts, deflating himself along with the works he was parodying. As his fame increased, however, and he began to take himself more seriously as an artist, the distance between Woody Allen and his models began to narrow until he is in danger of becoming something of a satiric object himself.

Woody Allen by David Schorr

This shrinking distance can be seen in the way his work has become increasingly autobiographical in recent years, reflecting his increasing sense of self-importance. His new play, *The Floating Light Bulb* (Lincoln Center Theater Company at the Vivian Beaumont), may not be exactly true to Allen's childhood history, but it is close enough to what we know about the author to raise suspicions about his continuing self-absorption. And the central figure has been cast with an actor bearing such a close physical resemblance to his creator, including a prominent Woody Allen schnozz, that it is difficult not to conclude that we are witnessing personal secrets. If so, the play catches Woody in a moment of profound self-pity. It seems to be the intention of the writing (not to mention the playing) to create a climate of understanding for the young hero in his relations with his family—one of the elements usually associated with a playwright's first play. Another symptom of juvenilia is the close relationship of the work to a literary model—in this case, Williams's *The Glass Menagerie*. As critics have already noted, Allen has cast his young surrogate in the role of Williams's Laura, substituting the boy's collection of magical tricks for Laura's collection of glass animals. In place of Williams's decaying southern belle with delusions of grandeur, Allen has created a hearty Jewish mama from Canarsie, but one with the same inflated expectations of her children. And he has replaced the Gentleman Caller with a visiting theatrical

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manager named Jerry Wexler, for whom, like Laura, the young boy is expected to perform. (As expected, the audition is a flop when the boy gets sick.)

The visit is a flop for the mother, too, whose husband is preparing to desert her. Allen contrives a long and rather irrelevant romantic scene between the mother and the manager in the second act which is concluded when he reveals that he is going off to Arizona with his sick mother. The play ends with the family trapped in its misery. I half-expected to see a Williams legend descend from the flies: "Things have a way of turning out so badly." The only variant from the Williams borrowings comes when Allen steals a device from Albee's *Virginia Woolf;* the mother starts to hit her husband with a cane, only to have it turn into a bouquet of flowers—one of her son's discarded magical tricks.

Ulu Grosbard's production does what it can to rescue this thin, faded dishrag of a play, given the limitations of his circumstances. As a kitchen drama, *The Floating Light Bulb* needs a small, intimate set, but the huge maw of the Beaumont stage has to be fed, so Santo Loquasto, the designer, has fashioned a mammoth backdrop consisting of a four-story tenement building complete with fire escapes and grilles on the windows. Bea Arthur, as the mother, is still playing the stentorian baritone queen of *Maude,* and Danny Aiello, as the father, has too much Tom Pedi hoarseness and too many Italian mannerisms to pass as a Jewish father; Brian Backer, impersonating young Woody with a soft stammer and hunched, defeated shoulders, plays every scene as if he were trying to squeeze the audience's tear ducts. Only Jack Weston gives an entirely satisfactory characterization, playing the mama's-boy manager with a combination of dazed confusion and gentle understanding that is both moving and funny. The part is really extrinsic to the play; interestingly enough, it is the only fully convincing one. Only when this man begins to speak about his clients in the borscht belt—a dog that can sing "Little Sir Echo" and say words like "Hamburger" and "Mother," a pair of Armenian brothers who engage in boxing bouts while the bells on their gloves play "Ave Maria"—do we begin to hear Woody Allen's true voice. Allen's impeccable ear for urban speech doesn't fail him here, and the world of failed vaudevillians is a territory he knows well. But the rest of the play is, unwittingly, just another of those literary parodies he has been writing for the *New Yorker.* I hope this brief affair with American realism, unhappy though it must be, will have some salutary effect on his future work, if only to convince Woody Allen that he creates his best art out of his observation of others, and his most convincing reality out of the distance he maintains between himself and the objects of his satire.

The return of the prodigal poet.

Milosz in Polish Eyes

by Wiktor Woroszylski

Czeslaw Milosz, a Polish poet and writer, was born in Lithuania, has lived in the United States for 20 years, and is a professor at an American university. When he received the Nobel Prize for literature last year it proved necessary to explain who Milosz was both to Poles and to Americans. The Lithuanians have been spared such explanations—in their country it is better not to know of Milosz's existence.

But is it possible to explain who a poet is? A poet is his own childhood, his native land, his fate, his premonitions, his great pain, anxiety, and contradictions. He is as well his language, its melody and asperity, its rise and fall, its allusions, meanings, associations. A poet is a way of enduring in that language and history, in that collection of landscapes and events, sufferings, dangers, and disturbances, and in that community of faces from ages past and present (and perhaps future as well) that have existed and remain in that language and history. Finally, a poet is a way of withdrawing from all that, of transcending those limits and embracing more—the other, the universal—so that translation, apart from the directly linguistic aspects, becomes unnecessary. Has that become Milosz's fate?

Even Poles do not know the country of his childhood except for those few who are, like him, expatriates, and there are no young people among them. The border between that country, that world, and the one that is Poland today was gouged out by bloody wars, uprootings, and deportations. The poet himself (born June 30, 1911, on the Szetejna estate, not his father's property, near the historic town of Kiejdany, on the left bank of one of the Nieman's tributaries) left behind the country of his childhood a long time ago. Actually, he left it gradually, always moving farther away and staying away longer. When he would return, it was not to his home but close by. From there he could constantly reach outward with his senses to that dense verdure, that river, and the clouds reflected in it. Then he could no longer return, the borders multiplied, space increased, and, having left that land forever, he was able to remain in it forever.

So how can people who have never been there come to know and understand Milosz? No doubt the only way is to remember the land of one's own childhood, to return to it, immerse oneself in one's own childhood river; to hear the song of those birds, to return home to one's roots and to nature, which promises and which saves. There is a certain human spiritual space in which all the lands of childhood coincide and are mutually comprehensible, where the division and confusion of languages are overcome and an essential unity is revealed. All we grownups have been disinherited from that country but almost all of us have retained (often without realizing it) the ability to reconstruct it in ourselves (and ourselves in it) and to make an inward version of the Prodigal Son's journey. This requires effort, but if we undertake it, if we succeed, then perhaps we will encounter the poet in the country of his childhood and we will not feel lost, like strangers, when, for example, we begin to read *The Valley of the Issa* (1955). It is not an autobiography but a novel, a literary work, a vision, a poetic recon-

Wiktor Woroszylski is the author of 12 volumes of poetry and a biography, *The Life of Mayakovsky* (Orion Press). This essay was translated from the Polish by Richard Lourie.

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struction of the world, a quest for order, the self (in the deepest anthropological sense), and for God. From that crossroad, as from any true crossroad wherever it may be, we will be able to travel anywhere our guide takes us—to *Native Realm* (1958), which also begins at that same point, the small white country house by the Niewiaza river. It then moves out from that center of the world to include first ethnic Lithuania, then historical Lithuania (the Grand Duchy of Lithuania), and later the lands of the Balts and the Slavs, the expanses of the Polish republic and the Russian empire, the tangled history, common life, and conflicts of those people, the cultural crucible of Wilno, the "Jerusalem of the North," the fate of the Jews and the Belorussians. Finally, we come to the poet's life story and adventure, the cycle of the philosophical and sometimes political adventures of his mind. But we will also move in other directions, to the locales of chance events, to moments of liberation when the poet escapes the map and calendar of his life and can serenely universalize experience as he did in the Alsatian town of Mittelbergheim where he awoke one autumn day (now a wanderer, a refugee not only from Szetejna and Wilno but from Warsaw and his past) to sigh prayerfully:

Do not rush me,
You, fire, power, might, for it is too early.
I have lived through many years and, as in this half-dream,
I felt I was attaining the moving frontier
Beyond which color and sound come true
And the things of this earth are united.
Do not yet force me to open my lips.
Let me trust and believe I will attain.
Let me linger here in Mittelbergheim.

and to state:

Here and everywhere
Is my homeland, wherever I turn
And in whatever language I would hear
The song of a child, the conversation of lovers.
Happier than anyone, I am to receive
A glance, a smile, a star, silk creased
At the knee. Serene, beholding,
I am to walk on hills in the soft glow of day
Over waters, cities, roads, human customs.

I quote fragments of "Mittelbergheim" instead of other of Milosz's poems not because it concentrates all his poetry (it obviously does not) but because it seems to me to concentrate the light of his poetry, *The Light of Day* (the title of a volume of his verse from 1953), the "soft glow of day." In Milosz's work clarity and the radiance of existence wage a ceaseless battle with darkness. It is a victorious struggle that is not fought with a simplified, rationalistic image of the world; rather, it is a battle in which the intensity, dramatic reserves, and fullness of life reveal darkness being absorbed by light and the luminous edifice of poetic existence being constructed from those particles of darkness.

There are roads leading out in many directions and to various places (it is curious how many of Milosz's titles are geographic or pseudogeographic—*The Valley of the Issa, Native Realm, Continents, City Without a Name, Where the Sun Rises and Where It Sets, Visions from San Francisco Bay, The Land of Ulro* . . .). Some of these places exist nowhere but on the map of imagination and moral feeling, like *The Land of Ulro* (1977), discovered in the poetry of William Blake, "a disinherited land . . . where a human being is turned into an interchangeable cipher," a sterile land inhabited by a "mind internally torn, convinced that man is nothing in the immensity of a hostile universe and because this wounds human pride sorely, it, at the same time, ascribes man the greatest of significance." However, it is not to submit to its laws that Milosz travels to the Land of Ulro but to contradict them; following in the footsteps of earlier wanderers—Swedenborg, Blake, Mickiewicz, Dostoevsky, Oscar

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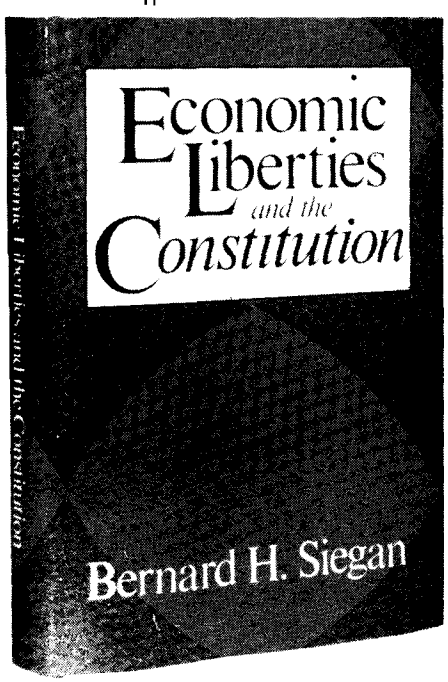

ECONOMIC LIBERTIES and the CONSTITUTION

Bernard H. Siegan

In this challenging book, Siegan declares that, if the Supreme Court were doing its job as the Framers of the Constitution and the Fourteenth Amendment intended, the nation would be much less burdened with excessive economic regulation. He points out that, while the Court is zealous in terminating state laws that threaten free expression, sexual privacy, or religious observance, since the 1940s it has done nothing about laws that limit the right of individuals or private corporations to engage in legitimate economic activities.

The result has been to give governments at all levels much greater power over the economic system and to harm society by inhibiting production, raising prices, curtailing competition and creating unemployment. Those most often harmed, concludes Siegan, are those who were supposed to be protected–people on the lowest rung of the economic ladder. 383 pages. $19.50

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Van de L. Milosz (his uncle, a poet who considered himself a Lithuanian and who wrote in French)—to illuminate the inhumanity of the world with faith in a God with human features, to proclaim a "renewed civilization," to plough and fertilize those sterile fields so that a "completely new man" could appear there, a man who would be able to say yes to our existence on earth.

These excursions into the poet's various lands are so fragmentary and cursory (it could not be otherwise without writing entire volumes) that I offer them to the reader with hesitation but also with the hope that in this encounter with an unknown world, the poet—some of that poet's voice, its features, signals, echoes—will prompt further reading, further thought.

But now it is time to speak of the astonishing experiences Czeslaw Milosz encountered in Poland. He emerged from five years of war and occupation with his life and with a volume of poetry entitled *Salvation*, a significant title then and whenever else Milosz sought salvation for the body and soul of man, perceiving the end of the world in the extermination of every human being and in the indifference and depravity of the witnesses. He asked:

> What is poetry which does not save
> Nations or people?
> A connivance with official lies,
> The song of drunkards whose throats will be cut in a moment,
> Readings for sophomore girls.

But emerging from the war alive he also wrote:

> That I wanted good poetry without knowing it,
> That I discovered, late, its salutary aim,
> In this and only this I find salvation.

Milosz joined those writers who, after the experience of those years, saw social and political reasons for attempting to find themselves a place in the new Polish society. So he published in the journals, belonged to the staff of one (the literary monthly *Creative Work*, then published in Krakow), eventually entered the diplomatic service and spent a few years as Poland's cultural attaché in the US and France. However, the events in Poland had taken such a turn and the screws were being put on so severely in all areas of life that, in 1950, while in Poland, the poet decided to break with his country. Then the usual mechanism went into operation: the refugee (fleeing Stalinist terror, lies, and cultural slavery) was transformed into an exile (vengefully driven from textbooks and newspapers, air waves and book stores). *Salvation* (1945) remained the only book of Milosz's ever officially published in Poland. For 30 years the censorship stood guard over his non-existence and when critics smuggled in a mention of the greatest contemporary Polish poet, they omitted his name, using formulations like "the author of *Salvation*."

Meanwhile, he continued to exist eating the bitter bread of exile (somewhat less bitter after 1960, when he was offered a professorship at Berkeley), and with the help of Jerzy Giedroyc, the editor of *Kultura* in Paris, Milosz published his books which, one may well assume, will always remain part of Polish literature. Some of them, translated into other languages, may also have influenced the minds of non-Polish readers, though Milosz himself was rather skeptical about that possibility. That it was in fact a reality was confirmed by the prizes he was awarded —first, in 1978, the Neustadt International Prize for Literature, and two years later, the Nobel Prize for literature.

BYPASSING RUE DESCARTES

Bypassing rue Descartes
I descended toward the Seine, shy, a traveler,
A young barbarian just come to the capital of the world.

We were many, from Jassy and Koloshvar, Vilno and Bucharest, Saigon and Marakesh,
Ashamed to remember the customs of our homes,
About which nobody here should ever be told:
The clapping for servants, bare-footed girls hurry in,
Dividing food with incantations,
Choral prayers recited by master and household together.

I had left the cloudy provinces behind,
I entered the universal, dazzled and desiring.

Soon enough, many from Jassy and Koloshvar, or Saigon or Marakesh
Would be killed because they wanted to abolish the customs of their homes.

Soon enough, their peers were seizing power
In order to kill in the name of the universal, beautiful ideas.

Meanwhile, the city behaved in accordance with its nature,
Rustling with throaty laughter in the dark,
Baking long breads and pouring wine into clay pitchers,
Buying fish, lemons and garlic at street markets,
Indifferent as it was to honor and shame and greatness and glory,
Because that had been done and had transformed itself
Into monuments representing nobody knows whom,
Into arias hardly audible or into turns of speech.

Again I lean on the rough granite of the embankment,
As if I had returned from travels through the underworlds
And suddenly saw in the light the reeling wheel of the seasons
Where empires have fallen and those once living are now dead.

There is no capital of the world, neither here nor anywhere else,
And the abolished customs are restored to their small fame,
And now I know that time of human generations is not like the time of the earth.

As to my heavy sins, I remember one most vividly:
How, one day, walking on a forest path along a stream,
I pushed down a rock on a water snake coiled in the grass.

And what I have met with in life was the just punishment
Which reaches, sooner or later, the one who breaks a taboo.

Czeslaw Milosz

Translated by Renata Gorczynski and Robert Hass

"THE DYNAMICS inherent in interposing the Soviet army in Poland are daunting. The venture would probably require a reinvigoration of unequivocal Stalinist methods. Whether the Kremlin gerontocracy would be up to the task in energy is a question. Politburo members' ages run between 66 and 78. Thanks to the mandatory retirement, the military high command is comparatively youthful. Old men may well be reluctant to call out their juniors to take charge of a military solution."

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Meanwhile in Poland, where despite official prohibitions the half-open life of the nonconformist elements (especially the rebellious young) created new areas of freedom, the legend of Milosz grew from year to year. His books were smuggled across the border, actors recited his poetry at literary evenings in private apartments, tapes of it were made. And when, a few years ago, editors established publishing houses considered illegal by the authorities (they preferred to be called independent), one of their first projects was to publish Milosz. The Romantic model of the poet-exile fed his legend—and indeed how much of Adam Mickiewicz's fate (he lived from 1798 to 1855 and is considered Poland's national poet) is repeated in Milosz's: the University of Wilno, the little group of friends, the expulsion from Wilno, the departure for the West and emigration, the teaching of Slavic literature, his books banned and smuggled into the country. However, that legend, seemingly borrowed from the 19th century, pulsed with the issues of contemporary life: the conflict between freedom and enslavement in both Milosz's life and works—for example, *The Captive Mind* (1953), essays on the suffocation of intellectuals under communism; between creative work and stagnation in the artistic forms permitted or directly ordered; between truth and the fiction of doctrine, hierarchy, uniform.

Did truth have to win out in this case? An accident of history (this poet is always accompanied by the accidents of history), the result of certain changes, information, and events, made it possible for the news of Milosz's award to reach the Poles, news which at other times would have been concealed or maligned. It was like a sudden explosion of truth, a rolling away of the stones, the triumphal flooding of some life-giving waters over a dry and thirsting field that was astonished but that at the same time had been waiting unconsciously for it to come. . . . Why was the poet of the Polish people's language, their fate, their yes and their no, suddenly revealed to them? What was the significance of that belated revelation? Was it simply a matter of the poet and the symbols he had carved into the stones of culture, or of something of which he himself had become a symbol? I participated in the meeting at Warsaw University on the morning when he was assigned that symbol. Throngs of students who until the day before had

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not been allowed to know of Czeslaw Milosz's existence now heard him discussed by a lecturer who until that day had been deprived of the right to lecture on him, and they heard as well Milosz's poetry recited by an actress who had been banned from the stage. In those days Poland was, in many different ways, embodying in its life the deep and moving theme of resurrection straight from the pages of the Scriptures (which Milosz has been industriously translating for several years). Departures and wanderings were now a thing of the past, a miraculous return to the source had occurred.

Economics, Pugnacity, and Laughter

A Life in Our Times
by John Kenneth Galbraith

(Houghton Mifflin; $16.95)

In 1939 John Kenneth Galbraith, who had been lecturing in economics at Harvard, went down to Washington like so many able and idealistic young intellectuals of his generation. His job was with the National Resources Planning Board, an offshoot of the Roosevelt White House.

Over the next nine years, his experience was varied, and his contributions both to the winning and to the understanding of the war were not negligible. Galbraith exercised virtually absolute authority over prices in the United States as price commissioner in the Office of Price Administration. He conducted the surveys of strategic bombing of Germany and Japan, with their surprising and important conclusions: that in each case bombing had done far less damage to the enemy's economy than had been assumed. And at the end of his tenure, he assumed a substantial share of responsibility for what will surely come to be seen as one of the greatest and most generous achievements of the United States in this century, the rebuilding of the German and Japanese economies.

In 1948 Galbraith was back at Harvard, still only a lecturer. Goaded by an offer from a rival university, Harvard made him a professor. But the appointment was fiercely disputed and in fact held up for a year by the university's board of overseers. According to their victim, the anti-Galbraith faction on this august body held two things, above all, against him: he was a liberal, and he had shown insufficient respect for the destructive achievements of the US Air Force.

The fight against his appointment, at any rate, was led by the Boston patrician Charles Cabot, "a decent man," as Galbraith calls him with characteristic generosity, and adds, with characteristic malice, that he was "impaled on an issue he did not fully understand." Some years later, after Cabot had been defeated and Galbraith's appointment confirmed, the two men chanced to be staying at the former Harriman *Schloss*, Arden House, a place long on *bella figura* but short on bathrooms. As Galbraith tried door after door in his search for this rare convenience, out stepped Cabot. Galbraith was determined to behave as he supposed a Cabot would do; to allow bygones to be bygones. In his memoirs, he records the ensuing exchange.

> He said, 'Good morning, Kenneth.'
> I bowed and replied, 'Good morning, Charles.'
> [Cabot hesitated, and Galbraith waited, his hand on the bathroom door. . . .] Then, his mind made up, [Cabot] squared his shoulders, came to a full stop and said, 'Kenneth, there is something I must tell you.'
> I smiled in a friendly, encouraging way.
> He said, 'It won't flush.'

I have described that episode at some length because, aside from what it reveals about the most famous of American universities and the conception of academic freedom that prevailed there, it tells so much about Galbraith and about this volume of memoirs in particular. It suggests, for one thing, the quality of his writing: the timing, the careful choice of the right word, the sly, sardonic humor. You can get annoyed with Galbraith. Indeed, he would be very disappointed if he thought you couldn't. But he does work hard to see to it that you won't be bored.

This incident conveys something of what he constantly refers to as his "arrogance," but is really more nearly a kind of innocent, even adolescent conceit, by no means successfully concealed by attempts, like this one, to turn the laugh against himself. It also helps to explain the surprising bitterness and hostility toward Harvard, the place, after all, where Galbraith has worked, with numerous interruptions, for more than 40 years and where, he admits, "we felt at home." It further hints at a certain ambiguity he seems to feel toward an elite he professes to despise, but of whose opinion he is nevertheless highly conscious. Last, it offers a taste of the sheer joyous vitality of the man's involvement in the conflicts, controversies, fashions, and feuds of his times: as economist, writer, teacher, historian, administrator, bureaucrat, diplomat, ambassador, speechwriter, politico, and above all publicist.

For a third of a century, Galbraith's talent as a publicist and a polemicist was equaled only by his ability to be on the inside with the brightest and the best, in the right place at the right time. At the Agriculture Department in the early New Deal years, in wartime Washington, in the strategic bombing surveys, at Harvard, at *Fortune* magazine, in Americans for Democratic Action, in the Stevenson campaigns and then in the Kennedy administration, even in Cambridge during the Keynesian revolution and in Stockholm when the Myrdals were graduate students—this is the Horatio Alger story of a gangling farm boy from southern Ontario who got to rub shoulders with the great, the true life tale of the outsider as insider.

It is not that the causes he championed were unworthy ones—not, certainly, to an old-fashioned liberal like me. He fought the good fight for Franklin Roosevelt and John Maynard Keynes, Adlai Stevenson, John F. Kennedy, and Eugene McCarthy, and even for George McGovern, for deficit financing and price controls, against anti-Semitism and cold war attitudes and the war in Vietnam. But simply to list his causes raises the ghost of a question: whether so compulsive an involvement perhaps reflected the man's sheer pugnacity as much as the strength of his intellectual or ethical commitment to all the banners under which he has drawn the sword.

At his best, he writes marvelously well. Yet in these memoirs he is not

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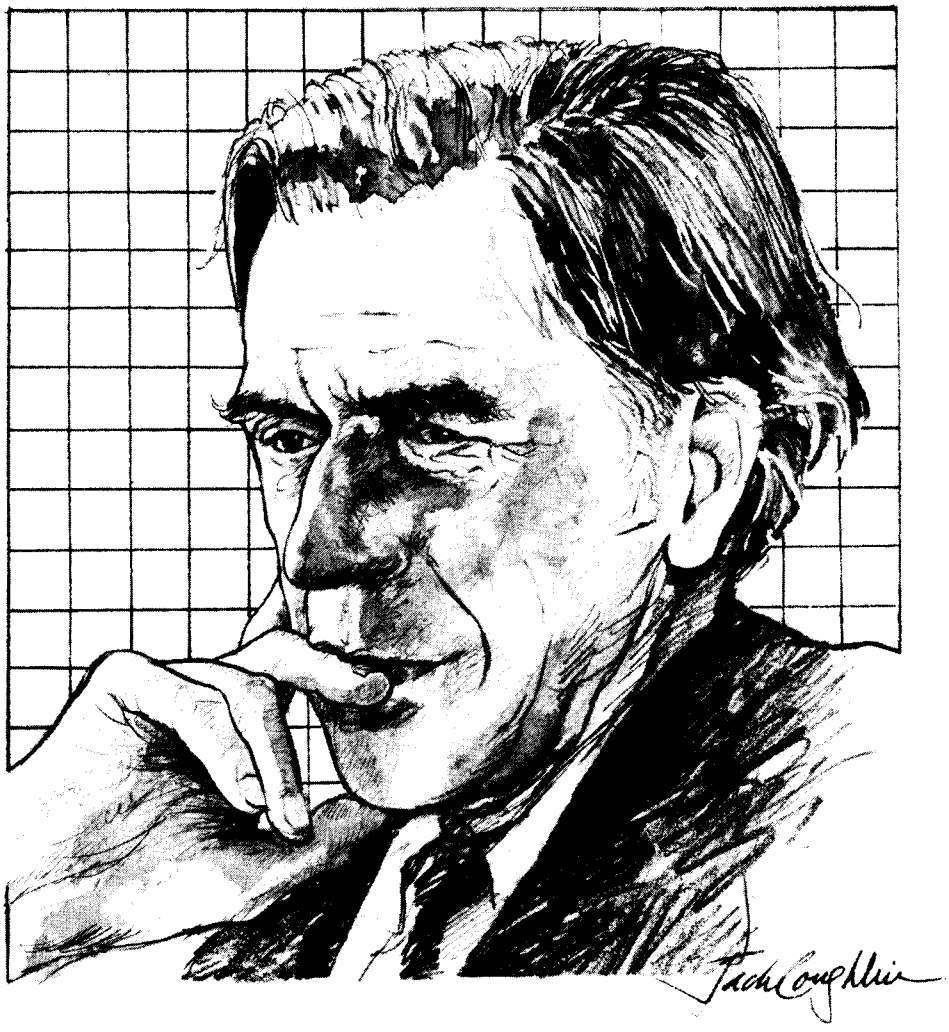
quite at his best, or not all the time. There are flashes of the dry cynicism he learned, he says, from Thorstein Veblen, and the parentage shows. There is an acid sketch of the Communists rushing to Washington in 1933 "to save the free enterprise system: Some found their view of capitalism substantially improved by the $3200 a year." There are irresistible stories, like the tale of the weary young Galbraiths pounding, uncomprehending, on the doors of a hotel in Sweden called the Hotel Stängt: in vain, because *Stängt*, unhappily, means closed. And there are some vintage Galbraithian aphorisms: "The experience of being disastrously wrong is salutary; no economist should be denied it, and not many are."

But there are slips too. He tells us that the text has been through six revisions. If so, strange aberrations have survived all six. Favorite words—"verdant" or "exiguous"—are overused. Howlers creep in: "Poznań, now Gdańsk," is roughly on all fours with saying "Toronto, now Montreal." And some of the sweeping aphoristic judgments do not withstand a moment's scrutiny. "Almost uniquely" among the world's disputed provinces, opines Galbraith, Kashmir is worth fighting over. What about Alsace? Or Lombardy? Or Belgium? Or the Punjab? They are scarcely among the world's deserts, yet they have been fought over enough to make that judgment sound silly.

Galbraith clearly has been much hurt, over the years, by the charge that he is arrogant. He makes a joke of it. President Kennedy asks him how he likes a *New York Times* profile. He likes it fine, he says, but he doesn't see why they have to call him arrogant. "Why not?" says his friend the president, "everyone else does." He recalls his "distaste"—a cruel word, in context—for the men who taught him agricultural science in his Ontario youth. But then he recalls the reflection of his friend, the movie actor David Niven, on his own dislike of school: that he could have been a pretty nasty little chap himself.

Galbraith even produces a cultural theory to account for this arrogance. The Galbraiths, it seems, were "recognized, we believed rightly, as being more intelligent than the others" in Elgin County, Ontario. And so the Galbraith legacy was "the inherent inferiority of the farm-reared boy in combination with an aggressive feeling that I owed it to all I encountered to make them better informed." It is, perhaps, a special case of a more banal phenomenon: the brassy front which the ambitious boy or girl from a provincial elite puts on to do battle with the dismissive attitudes of the big-time metropolitan elites which have to be beaten or joined.



What is intriguing about Galbraith is the extent to which he still affects a certain cockiness of this kind, 40 years after he joined the club. And what is even more intriguing, and rather endearing, is that he still obviously feels he ought to apologize for it.

There is ambivalence about his attitude to the high places of the world. He wants to beat, but he also wants to join. For all I know, it is an ambivalence rooted in the Scots Presbyterian ethos; the Presbyterians were quick to deny the moral legitimacy of anyone else's success, but not overtroubled with doubt about the moral legitimacy of their own. "One of my greatest pleasures in writing," Galbraith boasts, "has come from the thought that perhaps my work might annoy someone of comfortably pretentious position. Then comes the saddening realization that such people rarely read." That's good fun. But our Robin Hood has spent most of his life with people who, from where I sit, look adequately pretentious and comfortable. And whatever you think of such Galbraith enemies as Gottfried Haberler, Joseph A. Schumpeter, and Milton Friedman, all of them could read. No doubt a barefoot farm boy still feels like a barefoot farm boy after 30 years of tenure at Harvard, and when he is a millionaire with a villa at Gstaad and an ambassador and an honorary fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. But how seriously do we have to take him when he tells us about how tough it is?

I carp. In part, I carp because I catch myself (no honorary fellow though I be) playing the same game. And if I didn't catch myself, my children would catch me. But more than that, I think, I carp because what I have always admired about Galbraith, what has given me pleasure and also sometimes given me courage, has been the jaunty way he has taken on life's fools and life's knaves. He learned it, he says, from Veblen, who made "the rich the object, not of envy, which concedes superiority, but

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of ridicule, which does not." If for "the rich" you substitute what Galbraith calls "any self-satisfied elite," it is not a bad attitude: not a bad inscription to weave on your banner—just so long as you remember that, long before you have ceased to think of yourself as an outsider, others will have come to see you as the most privileged of insiders.

Still, this is an enjoyable book, full of fun, full of wisdom, and full of rare insights into the history of our times from a man who never shirked the place where the melee was thickest, and who knows how to laugh at the wounds he got as well as the ones he gave.

Godfrey Hodgson

Godfrey Hodgson is the author of *All Things to All Men: The False Promise of the Modern American Presidency* (Simon & Schuster).

Accounting for Differences

The Pursuit of Inequality by Philip Green

(Pantheon Books; $14.95)

Philip Green has written a polemic against a variety of doctrines recently debated in intellectual and academic circles that have provided real or apparent justification for existing social inequalities. His arguments are for the most part lucid and compelling, although overstatement and an intemperate tone not infrequently detract from their force. He divides his adversaries into two groups. The first consists of scholars who have revived and updated biological hereditarianism to defend or "rationalize" inequalities of race, class, and sex. The second group, described as "preventers of equality" rather than defenders of inequality, includes social critics and political theorists who have opposed government programs intended to reduce inequality such as affirmative action and social services. In the first group, Green criticizes at length Arthur R. Jensen's work on racial differences in IQ, Richard Herrnstein on class and IQ, Steven Goldberg's anti-feminist case for the "inevitability of patriarchy," and, more briefly and broadly, some adherents of what, following Edward O. Wilson, has come to be called "sociobiology." Green's targets in the second group are various critics of the *Bakke* decision, some of the neoconservative opponents of reverse discrimination, Milton Friedman's free-market economics, and Robert Nozick's abstract neo-Lockean model of a "minimal state."

So diverse are the disciplinary affiliations of these people and the intellectual or moral traditions from which they stem that it is hard not to feel that Green has created a somewhat artificial "amalgam" in grouping them all together under the label "pursuers of inequality." Some of them seem merely willing to sacrifice greater equality to other more highly cherished values. Green perceptively observes that scientific hereditarians past and present typically have claimed that the cause of some social problem "lies in the faulty genes of *some class of people other than that to which the scientist himself belongs*" (his italics). But he tends to exaggerate the degree to which men like Jensen, Herrnstein, and most of the sociobiologists have encouraged the drawing of political and ideological inferences from their research. Jensen's harshest academic critics have conceded that he is not personally or ideologically a "racist." A certain cloistered naiveté about politics and social issues has long characterized many biological scientists—and natural scientists in general, for that matter—who thrust themselves or stumble into the arena of political controversy.

Green also goes too far in describing all of his biological inegalitarians as "sociobiologists." He reports a few simple-minded remarks of Edward O. Wilson on nature and culture, but Wilson is an entomologist, and students of animals eager to ascribe human significance to their subject have long been prone to such statements. (Alfred Kinsey is an earlier case in point.) This hardly makes them inegalitarians unless any search for possible genetic influences on human society is so regarded. The most prolific sociologist to have embraced a sociobiological perspective, Pierre van den Berghe, recently reviewed Jensen's latest book and specifically objected to critics of IQ who lump together psychologists and sociobiologists, arguing that the latter are much too knowledgeable about genetics to treat a complex "polygenic" capacity like intelligence as if it could be neatly divided into inherited and acquired components—very much the same argument that Green himself makes against Jensen and Herrnstein.

Sociobiologists have tried to demonstrate that various human institutions and practices are the products of natural selection rather than of cultural invention. Like most sociologists, I am skeptical of these efforts, but they in no way entail any claim that inequalities between groups are rooted in genetic differences. Attempts to identify a common human nature partly shaped by biology, or to relate universal social institutions to the evolutionary origins of the species, are not inherently predisposed to favor some version of Victorian social Darwinism or a biological determinism that legitimates any particular institutional status quo. They may even provide, and have often done so as far back as Rousseau, intellectual support for egalitarianism and social innovation. Green would perhaps agree with this, but I would be happier if he had said as much in view of the extravagant abuse directed by so many on the political left against any efforts to find links between human biology and social life.

Several books and numerous articles and reviews have been published in the last decade criticizing Jensen's work. Jensen has now produced a second enormous volume, too recently for Green to do more than take note of it, in which he responds to his critics primarily on the single issue of whether IQ tests are "culturally biased" against minority groups. Nearly all of those involved in this controversy have been psychometricians like Jensen himself and social or bio-statisticians. Green, a political scientist, is none of these and his discussion of Jensen has the considerable merit of avoiding intricate technical minutiae and going to the heart of Jensen's dubious basic assumptions, although he does include an appendix summarizing the major, strictly technical objections to Jensen's claims. Green cogently argues that Jensen assumes

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that the influence of environment on IQ can actually be held constant, questionable even in separated identical twin studies let alone when comparing black and white test scores; that he assumes individual differences permit reasonable inferences about race-linked group differences; and that Jensen's research lacks any historical or cross-cultural perspective showing changes over time and comparable differences between dominant and subordinate ethnic groups in other countries, which clearly suggests the transitory and mutable nature of the black/white IQ differences he finds in the United States.

But is it really the case, as Green insists, that Jensen's and Herrnstein's work has been accepted by "a significant part of the American intellectual class," that "in the heartland of academic liberalism (and conservatism) . . . his [Jensen's] comparative statements about race were hardly challenged," or that "the assiduous cultivation of publicity by Jensen, Herrnstein, and Shockley produc[ed] a virtual monopoly on public attention"? My contacts in western Massachusetts (Green teaches at Smith) are limited, but I do not recall hearing anything but vehemently negative comments on the work of these men, nor have I seen a single favorable review in the large number of academic and intellectual periodicals I read or at least scan. Surely it was the strident attacks in the early 1970s by radical student groups, extending even to lecture-hall disruptions and threats of violence, that attracted the attention of the media to the claims of the hereditarians. Shockley, to be sure, as well as the ubiquitous H.J. Eysenck in Britain, have seemed to thrive on provocation of the left, but Herrnstein's main offense was to publish in the *Atlantic Monthly* and Jensen has confined himself to ponderous books and articles in specialized journals. In England, the plot of Malcolm Bradbury's novel *The History Man* revolved around a radical sociologist at a provincial university who circulated the rumor that a prominent hereditarian (resembling Eysenck) had been invited to give a public lecture there; his purpose was to manipulate the university into actually extending such an invitation to uphold its reputation for academic freedom so that he might organize a demonstration against the speaker that would "radicalize" the campus. Bradbury was writing fiction, but his story did not lack verisimilitude to anyone acquainted with American as well as British campuses in the early 1970s. Yet Green, apart from one passing parenthetical reference to the left having challenged Jensen "with a passion equal to his own," makes no mention whatever of the campus furor over Jensen's and, especially, Herrnstein's views, which did far more to publicize them than their prior appearance in print.

Green views the "biological inegalitarians" as agents of a "new assault on equality" (a phrase first coined back in 1972) born in the aftermath of the egalitarian spirit of the 1960s. Certainly their work was noticed because it was "controversial," especially when it became the major target of the dying student movement. But with the exception of the anti-feminists, I am not persuaded that the hereditarians were partisans of, or even instruments used by, an emerging anti-egalitarian political movement, although obviously they were not ardent supporters of left-wing causes and ideals. Jensen made an opening reference to his original 1969 article to the supposed failure of compensatory education, but that was his only politically relevant observation. Herrnstein published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, hardly a notorious outlet for conservative propaganda, although an editorial introduction suggested that his article might have implications for racial as well as class differences despite his failure to mention the subject.

There is, in fact, nothing particularly new about the claims made for the heritability of intelligence and its possible bearing on group differences. I remember hearing or reading nearly everything put forward by the IQ psychologists when I was a student in the 1940s. Their position, moreover, was as vigorously assailed by my social science teachers as Green assails that of their successors today.

The point is that the nature versus nurture or heredity versus environment debate is unlikely ever to be fully resolved, the contestants deriving their positions from different disciplinary and research traditions that are virtually self-perpetuating. Some biological scientists will always be prepared to make large claims for the influence of genes just as social scientists are disposed to favor social and cultural causation. The discovery of DNA may have had more to do with renewed interest in the heritability of intelligence, and with the appeal of sociobiology in particular, than the shifting political climate. One can wish that the subject might be firmly relegated to the pages of obscure technical periodicals. I agree with Green, and so no doubt would Senator Proxmire, that further studies of IQ heritability are a waste of scarce research funds. But I have grave doubts about Green's suggestion that "professional tolerance" should be withdrawn from such work. Is he proposing that Jensen be fired from his tenured post at Berkeley? That the American Psychological Association should expel or officially condemn him? That he should be pelted with rolled-up reprints of his articles whenever he gives a public lecture? Green repeatedly describes Jensen's research as "wretchedly shoddy," "fraudulent," "irresponsible," and the like, but the American academy would be decimated if the standards by which he evaluates Jensen's logic and evidence were employed to assess the rights of its members to hold their jobs. Perhaps a handful of superbly objective and disciplined minds would instruct the rest of us on Sunrise Semester, a possibility Green proposes in mocking Herrnstein's naiveté about the indispensability of those occupations correlated with high IQ scores.

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The anti-feminist writers differ from the other hereditarians in that they are clearly reacting in an *ad hoc* defensive manner to the women's liberation movement, which has affected more people more profoundly than the movements for racial and class equality. The men whose arguments for an allegedly innate male "dominance" Green rebuts are younger and less academically illustrious than the other hereditarians he attacks. One of them in fact, George Gilder, is not an academic at all and since Green wrote he has improbably combined his anti-feminism with the advocacy of supply-side economics in his best-selling *Wealth and Poverty*.

There is little or no connection between the neoconservative opponents of affirmative action and the scientific hereditarians. Green finds exactly one ambiguously favorable reference to Jensen, and that by a not very well-known writer, in the pages of *The Public Interest*. One can be sure that were there more, he would have ferreted them out; in their absence, he is reduced to sneers that the critics of affirmative action are secret "bigots" who really must have read and agreed with Jensen, Herrnstein, Goldberg, et al.

Nevertheless, these critics, in contrast to the hereditarians, are undeniably political advocates and activists who have increasingly tended toward an absolutist defense of individual "merit" and the identification of "affirmative action" *per se* with fixed statistical quotas for minority representation imposed and enforced by the courts and federal bureaucracies. This position represents a departure from views once advanced by some of its present advocates (by Nathan Glazer, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Daniel Bell, for example, though the latter is improperly classified by Green as a neoconservative), who in the early 1960s favored *selective* preferential treatment for those victimized in the past by racial discrimination. Today the neoconservative polemicists rarely concede the justice and social desirability of sustained efforts to seek out women and blacks to fill positions from which they have been unfairly excluded in the past, efforts that in no way necessarily imply rigid representation by quotas even when anti-discrimination statutes provide individuals with the opportunity to turn to the courts if they suspect unfair treatment resulting from gender or racial bias.

I strongly approve of affirmative action in the sense just indicated, as does Peter Steinfels in his thoughtful and humane book criticizing the neoconservatives. But both of us, I fear, would strike Philip Green as wishy-washy. He wholeheartedly endorses what Nathan Glazer has called "hard affirmative action": quotas, legal compulsion with the burden of proof on the defendant, and the rest. Green has no qualms about making absolute the distinction between groups that have suffered caste penalties because of their race or gender and the mere victims of non-racial ethnic or religious discrimination or of class subordination in the form of enduring poverty and *de facto* exclusion from educational opportunities and job markets. Although Green lays heavy stress on the pervasiveness of the past injustices suffered by women and blacks, he is not worried by the possibility of using quotas to institutionalize group privileges that run the risk of becoming permanent. That is because he favors in general a form of delegate rather than representative democracy in which groups, not individuals, are the carriers of fundamental political rights. I find this notion repellent and potentially illiberal in its relative indifference to the rights of the minorities of one that all of us on occasion become.

The Pursuit of Inequality is such a well-written and usually well-argued book that I regret the displays of spleen and ideological overkill that so often obstruct its main line of argument.

Dennis H. Wrong

Dennis H. Wrong is professor of sociology at NYU and an editor of *Dissent*. His most recent book is *Power: Its Forms, Bases and Uses* (Harper & Row).

Has Success Failed Roth?

Zuckerman Unbound
by Philip Roth

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux; $10.95)

If it were only a matter of wit and intellect, Philip Roth's position as one of the masters of American fiction would be unquestioned. But egged on by some perverse internal logic, he has since *Portnoy's Complaint* usually resorted to the tactics of a schoolboy: playing pranks, defying conventions, alternately revering and mocking his elders, and scandalizing his peers. His new short novel, *Zuckerman Unbound*, is another extravagant complaint, this time putting the blame on fame, though certainly not exonerating, even on grounds of double jeopardy, the family.

Nathan Zuckerman, the fledgling author who in *The Ghost Writer* made a pilgrimage to the Berkshires seeking guidance and approval for his work from an admired novelist (concocted of patches of I.B. Singer and essences of Bernard Malamud), is now somewhat older and vastly more successful. He is reaping the strange fruits of his outrageous best-selling novel, *Carnovsky*. Though he has earned a million dollars (slated for investment but still "in my shoe"), he is harassed by advice, kidnap threats, predatory women, masturbators, and misinterpretation. The voice is familiar—the exasperation, edged with laughter, bordering on hysteria, of Portnoy's "Whew! Have I got grievances! Do I harbor hatreds I didn't even know were there!"—but we can't recognize the prose. The merriment and rollicking buffoonery of the controversial earlier novel are noticeably missing.

His sentences punctuated by an incredulity that reminds us of the maniacal nods by which comedian Woody Allen cues us in to the world's absurdities, Zuckerman embarks on a saturnine chronicle of the vexations a popular and talented writer is forced to endure. Heads turn on the Fifth Avenue bus, ribald salutations are flung at him, a female correspondent offers to take him to Swiss lakes and chocolate factories ("would love to turn you on to some of the most surreal and moving experiences to be had in that country") and signs herself "Numbered Acc't 776043." His most adhesive fan and persecutor is Pepler, once known as "Alvin the Jewish Marine," of rigged TV quiz show fame in the 1950s. Accosting Nathan in a Second Avenue delicatessen, he plies

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him with flattery ("In my estimation you are up there with Stephen Crane"), appropriates half his sandwich, borrows his handkerchief, and pins him against the street mailbox to listen to the sad tale of his mortification by the media. At wit's end, Nathan suggests an ice cream cone. "Yes, yes, my treat, absolutely. For our great Newark writer who has cast his spell over the entire country," cries Pepler, hurrying into the store for two scoops, allowing his captive to make a quick getaway.

The reader, equally trapped, may wonder why Roth has such patience for this objectionable figure, with his distressing confusion of personal vanity and racial pride, no doubt destined, with some justice, to provide one more argument in the Anti-Defamation League's dossier on Roth's mishandling of Jewish characters. But the temptation is all too clear—Pepler is the perfect catalyst for talents at which Roth has no peer: mimicry and derision. It is marvelous to hear once more through his infallible ear (especially for fraudulent cadences) the speech of the self-educated immigrant's son, reverberating city nerves and city choler, brimming with insatiable hunger for self-expression on all fronts. "May I speak frankly, Nathan, I would give anything to sit down with you for one evening, any night you wanted, and tell you what was going on in this country. . . ." Bearding Zuckerman yet another time to demand a critique of one paragraph in his self-assigned review of *Carnovsky*, Pepler becomes Roth's outlandish personification of the creative mania set loose by our culture of democracy. Allegedly acquainted with a friend of Sulzberger, Pepler nurtures a secret ambition to move into the vacant book reviewer's slot at the *New York Times*.

While their speech is different, victim and victimizer are psychological birds of a feather, preening their egos and brooding over their good name. Both hoard compliments, Alvin boasting about his embellishment of the Jewish image on prime time, Zuckerman recalling, with no small relish, praise from Cousin Essie: "Oh you're a sly little fox, Nathan, behind those harmless professor's glasses. . . . I have to hand it to you. You have put something over on the public with this book." And both reason from paranoia, behaving as if they lived in a permanent state of siege. Remembering that a college teacher of his was shot as he was drinking milk and reading P.G. Wodehouse, Zuckerman envisions some loner using his picture in *Life* as a dart-throwing target, and runs in terror from a thin elderly woman with a "Luger-sized" purse.

Though in his essays collected in *Reading Myself and Others*, Roth is quick to dismiss identity between author and hero, it is not hard to imagine that he harbors similar thoughts. Always plotting to scoop the critics and preempt their attacks, he permits one of the few characters he respects, Zuckerman's silvery-haired European agent, André Schevitz, to upbraid the novelist: "You hide out in Shloimie's Pastrami Haven, pretending to be harmless Mr. Nobody from Nowhere. And by now it is all beginning to lose its eccentric charm, Nathan, and is taking on a decidedly paranoic aroma. What are you up to, anyway? Are you out to appease the Gods? Are you trying to show them up in heaven and over at *Commentary* that you are . . . not the obstreperous author of such an indecent book?"

André and his wife Mary—one of these salty outspoken wiseacre-ish women who often pop up in Roth's fiction and (like Tarnapol's sister in *My Life as a Man*) have the hero's number—are the chief prompters here in that never ending dispute that Roth conducts with critics like Irving Howe, with the Jewish community, and with himself about his ambivalence toward middle-class Jewish life. "You felt stultified writing 'proper, responsible' novels," André reminds him. "You set out to sabotage your own moralizing nature, and now that you've done it, and done it with the relish of a real saboteur, now you're humiliated, you idiot, because nobody aside from you seems to see it as a profoundly moral and high-minded act."

The reader probably will feel that he couldn't have said it better himself. Ever since Roth invented the conniving Private Sheldon Grossbart in the superb early story, "Defender of the Faith," he has been compulsively dwelling upon criticism of his treatment of Jewish characters, and devoting interviews, articles, and fictional episodes to defending himself. In a touching scene from *The Ghost Writer*, Nathan's father walks him to the bus stop, trying doggedly to stir his son to a sense of communal and family responsibility. And in *Zuckerman Unbound*, the mail brings an accusation that "it is hardly possible to write of Jews with more bile, contempt and hatred." The irony of the situation is that far from hating Jewish life, Roth has continuously immersed himself in it, and no other American writer has conveyed its pungent mixture of warmth, shrewdness, humor, and exclusiveness with greater resonance.

Yet there *is* something about his fiction that invites such reproaches. But the problem has less to do with ethnic loyalty than with his predilection for the ludicrous and the irascible in the human species, and his natural aversion (despite fascination with desire) to a romantic image of men and women. We don't resent his deprecating, uncharitable outlook quite as much when it appears in comic garb, and it is easier to take Roth on faith when he is consciously undertaking broad comedy. He is very much at home, and we are more at home with him, in such farcical scenes as the one where famous author meets famous actress. Intent on weaning Zuckerman from self-righteousness, André and Mary introduce the solitary writer to a stunning Irish screen star, Caesara, who dresses in flame-colored veils and cockatoo feathers, and reads Richard Ellman and Sören Kierkegaard. It is a case of fame and culture seeking their own level, and the celebrated combo takes fire at the mere mention of James Joyce. Unfortunately, in the morning Caesara has fled to a lover in another country, a mysterious "F." whose note Zuckerman noticed lying on her dresser, and who turns out to be none other than a bearded Latin political leader, currently very strategic in the balance of power on several continents.

If this episode is not uproariously funny, it is certainly, like many of the

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bizarre contretemps and snappy comebacks in *Zuckerman Unbound*, very diverting. Could Philip Roth be subordinating his sense of kinship to writers like Kafka, Bellow, and Malamud, and thinking of himself less as moralist than as gifted entertainer? The latter is a rare breed in American letters, and it would be no dishonor to class him with a satirist of language and manners like Peter de Vries who, for all his puns and frivolous airs, has told us more of marriage and of men than many a professional sociologist.

In his early stories and novels, Roth was able to convince readers of his serious intent partly because he abided by the literary conventions; and the constraints of building plot and character already created some illusion of the author's faithful attention to the outside world. Since *Portnoy's Complaint*, however, Roth has summoned up only a perfunctory curiosity for the passing throng but a passionate intensity for the scrutiny of himself or his fictional alter egos, without learning from the master self-scrutinizers, Proust and Dostoevsky, to ponder his frailties in some larger context. His two genuine preoccupations have been with the writer's craft and the writer's ego. (In *Zuckerman Unbound*, even the would-be kidnapper has opinions about writing. "Flash, yes, depth, no" is his verdict on *Carnovsky*.) In this narrow terrain, he acquits himself magnificently. We have only to recall his pleasurable account of Tarnapol's daily regimen at a writing colony in *My Life as a Man* or the dazzling candid shot of Abravanel, an easily identifiable novelist, in *The Ghost Writer*:

> In fact, the writer who found irresistible all vital and dubious types, not excluding the swindlers of both sexes who trampled on the large hearts of his optimistic undone heroes; . . . the writer whose absorption with 'the grand human discord' made his every paragraph a little novel in itself, every page packed . . . with the latest news of manias, temptations, passions, and dreams, with mankind aflame with feeling—well, in the flesh he gave the impression of being out to lunch.

Roth's sparkle and compelling style make it even more frustrating that the range of his interests should have become so narrow. Where are the proper subjects of the serious novel: politics, society, work (*other* people's work), love (not amorousness), morality (not the exercise of defusing indictments of his fiction)? This is a fair enough question to ask of a novelist who, even in this small book of vignettes, brief encounters, and one-liners, confirms the enormous talent he has shown ever since *Goodbye, Columbus* for conjuring up the complex texture of family life, the powerful clasp of close relations.

In the final section of *Zuckerman Unbound*, unlike anything in the rest of the book, Roth describes the hero's visit to his dying father in Florida. Dr. Zuckerman is tucked into the bedsheets, paralyzed and speechless, surrounded by relatives. Cousin Essie recalls the crushing of concord grapes for wine when they were children and the mandel bread Nathan's grandmother used to bake. Nathan's mother and brother are in tears, begging him to speak to his father, and Nathan, at a total loss, robotically begins to summarize the contents of a paperback he read on the plane, Carl Sagan's *Cosmos*. It is an absolutely remorseless portrait of a professionally articulate man who cannot think what to say to a dying parent—and an extraordinary piece of writing. In-laws, casual neighbors somehow manage to express their affection but Nathan, latest of a long line of rancorous Roth offspring, is thinking bitterly: "All that respectable moralizing, all those superfluous prohibitions, that furnace of pieties, that Lucifer of rectitude, that Hercules of misunderstanding, extinguished." The scene, coldly realistic, is nevertheless full of family sentiment (Nathan recalls that his parents quarreled only once a year, when they rolled up the rugs in tarpaper for the summer) and emotional turmoil, and it echoes, as all great fiction does, a universal weakness: in this case, the helplessness of the living in the face of the dying.

Roth being Roth, he contrives to snatch some of these humane feelings back. When Nathan is on the plane, he feels only relief that he is no longer answerable to his father's moral imperatives. But his brother reminds him that his father spoke one word to Nathan before his death, "Bastard," and the reader is left in complete uncertainty: is Zuckerman really unbound, or will the vulture of guilt continue, as it has for several volumes, to gnaw at his liver?

Perhaps the moral of the book is a literary one. Having liberated himself so completely from the conventions and purposes of the old-fashioned novel—creating a sense of place, characters we can identify with, the security that diverse behavior is understood—Roth may choose to bind himself to them again. The writer who agitates us with the death scene in *Zuckerman Unbound* can write in still another and better way about life.

Isa Kapp

Isa Kapp writes criticism for various magazines and is working on a book called *Love and Marriage in the Middle Classes*.

In Praise of the Eternal Feminine

The Time Falling Bodies Take to Light: Mythology, Sexuality and the Origins of Culture by William Irwin Thompson

(St. Martins Press; $14.95)

The seer Tiresias lived for a while as a young man, then changed his form and became a young woman. Hearing of his unique experience, Zeus and Hera came to ask him whether men or women experienced the greater sexual pleasure. Tiresias exclaimed there was no doubt at all: women enjoyed sex nine or ten times more than men. Hera was so enraged by this answer she struck Tiresias blind. He had betrayed to men the secret power of women.

William Irwin Thompson provides many definitions of myth in this difficult, philosophical book, including "Myth is the history of the soul," and "Myth is science wrought to its uttermost." The myth of Tiresias describes the terror in men's souls at the scale and mystery of female sexuality. Hera's punishment, an analogy with castration, is a male myth, consecrating as truth ("science wrought to its uttermost") an erotic imbalance between the

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sexes. Thompson's book enjoins us all to redress this by reconciling ourselves to femaleness. Though he does not mention Tiresias, Thompson is a self-styled magus of the same type.

His genre is salvation history, and he proposes a new redemption for our catastrophe-bound planet by an inner reawakening of the female in men. His Blakean title reflects a use of the Gnostic doctrine that humanity fell when it learned sexual consciousness and rebelled against it. In the course of a ramble through pre-history, Sumer, ancient Egypt, and theorists from Jung to E.O. Wilson, Thompson develops the theme that our trapped material bodies can find the lost light again. He wishes us to be two-sexed, Tiresian, and he shares that prophet's belief that women have greater, and neglected, healing force.

Rather coyly, Thompson hints at his own taste for the feminine principle, when he mentions some corroborating "experiences in Kriya yoga." But he describes how during Tantric meditation, "the *sushumna* of the spine becomes a vagina and the yogi feels an ecstatic experience that is both male and female at once." Thompson also extols Upper Paleolithic culture for its similar understanding. He reinterprets the famous enigma in the Shaft of the Dead Man at Lascaux, and finds that the fallen man with an erect penis is a shaman envisioning through psychic forces in the genitals the Great Goddess in her aspect of a huge life-giving bison. Thompson also suggests that Christ incorporates the feminine principle, through the vulva-shaped wound in his side.

Such a fusion of spiritual and genital consciousness in esoteric thought gives biology an inordinately important symbolic place, and though Hera's reaction to Tiresias's presumption was perhaps excessive, surely one of the inviolable mysteries is the experience of the other sex. The Tantric yogi considers, with Thompson, that he has experienced the state of being female. This must be hubris. Sexual difference is a law, and because of its legitimacy, much magic and much power accrues to people who break it (the celibate priest, the cross-dressed shaman, Joan of Arc). It is this marginal tradition with which Thompson, for all his denials of personal shamanistic ambitions, identifies himself.

He tells us that "scientific models and scientistic myths are not seaworthy craft . . . ," and, at the beginning of the book, he seems to be following Foucault in saying that there is no fundamental model of human personality or any Golden Age in the past, but that all is gradual accretion and a long apprenticeship. He crushes the new social Darwinists, whom he quite rightly identifies with the sociobiologists and their evolutionist and mechanical forecasts; he declares that "What we are is what we see," and where Robert Ardrey saw hominids making the leap into *sapientia* through the invention of the first murder weapon, Thompson sees "myth, poetry, and a Whiteheadian philosophy of organism." Actually what he sees is a golden age, life as it still is for boys before they leave the care of mummy, when they still go through the door marked "Ladies" with her, and have not been banished into sexual difference. He projects the nurturant, intimate group of the nursery under the shelter of a mother's love onto pre-history. According to his own "scientistic myth," his Paleolithic mothers are responsible for everything good.

Humanity's leap into culture—when it left the forest for the savanna—was not inspired by the first weapon, but by women who, through controlling their bodies, abandoned estrus (the intermittent fertile periods of animals) for the menses, and became erotically exciting and available all the time. This shift to continual fertility is the origin of culture as we know it. Of course Thompson, who is the first poet of history as myth, does not use such vulgar language. He calls this revolution "the eroticization of time," and it represents his attempt, as I see it, to come to terms with the mana of the womb and the vagina that Tiresias's myth expresses.

His mothers are given even more credit: they make the leap into measurement and language; the religion of their goddess inspires animal farming (her sacrificial beasts are the first to be domesticated); their gathering of cereals marks the start of agriculture because, as they drop seeds on the way home, they begin the process of cross-pollination. But, alas, women's cleverness and self-sufficiency angers the men, and by Neolithic times, men are again clubbing together against women, just as in the bad old days when estrus ruled, and falling out amongst themselves in Yang-like competitiveness, greed, and desire for dominance. Women, Thompson regrets, are thus responsible for war as well. The author often admits (the book is repetitive, as if it had been edited from lectures) that myth is made in its creator's image, and so his portrait of prehistoric life is not intended as a traditional historical reconstruction. His method is broadly permissive; he passes from mainly archaeological evidence to literary works with little concern for their different value, and examines in some depth the story of Gilgamesh and the myth of Isis and Osiris. He is a committed syncretist, and all segments of a story, of whatever date or provenance or diffusion, have equal value for him. Although this can be a stimulating approach, sidestepping tedious textual criticism, Thompson does not have the narrative skills of a Lévi-Strauss recounting the legends of Brazil or a James Frazer collecting myths of tree worship and dying gods.

The Epic of Gilgamesh and other shards from Sumer inscribed with poems like "The Descent of Inanna into the Underworld" are miracles of beauty, and Thompson, deciphering in them a programmatic conflict of male and female, attenuates their mystery and their power. When Gilgamesh loses the plant of eternal vigor, he learns the tragic Faustian lesson of mortality, that his intimations of human power and knowledge will never be fulfilled. Although he intuits so profoundly the nature of the gods, he will never be god-like. But Thompson's arcane tendencies make this episode bathetic: he likens the snake who steals the plant from Gilgamesh to the serpent of Tantric discipline, ("the fact that the serpent returns to the depths indicates that Gilgamesh has not become an initiate") and so narrows the universality of this greatest of poems to a degree that is quite disgraceful.

The myth of Isis and Osiris is likewise more intense in its beauty than Thompson's meandering synthesis makes it sound. Again Tantric principles are discovered ruling ancient Egyptian thought, though the discussion of spinal fluid, third eyes, ecstatic states, and so forth is not the prime matter of his text, but an obscure and impenetrable undercurrent. He gives no references to Tantric works that I could see, except

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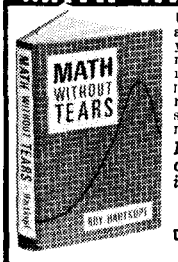

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for Swami Muktunanda's *Guru* of 1972, and shows no knowledge of the Sanskrit epics or Western commentaries upon them. He has experienced yoga, but he does not say where.

The vindication of the Eternal Feminine, *Das Ewig Weibliche*, as bodied forth by a mother goddess, locates desirable human qualities—peacefulness, lovingness, empathy, restraint—in the female body and its biological functions in exactly the same way as the mother-worshipping aspect of Christianity and its cult of the Mother of God. Yet it is a visible contemporary phenomenon that in countries where veneration of the Virgin is marked, the status of women outside the home role of mother is low. Thompson says that the home is "the capitol of women's mysteries." Few feminists today would argue that women should emulate the way men have gone about things outside the home, as Indira Gandhi and Margaret Thatcher unfortunately do; but neither can the members of society be equal or the feminine principle active if women are honored only in the home. The most effective way of achieving this restriction is to confuse the female-in-her-body with the concept that through long acculturation has come to be "feminity." The virtues of the latter are common to humanity, and though they are seen in sharper focus in the mother-infant relation than in any other, this doesn't mean that female biology is their exclusive identifying sign. The yogi doesn't have to experience a vagina or Christ assume a vulva to attain them.

Marina Warner

Marina Warner is the author of the forthcoming *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (Knopf).

Brief Review

Midnight's Children by Salman Rushdie

(Knopf; $12.95)

Salman Rushdie's oracular novel begins:

> I was born in the city of Bombay . . . once upon a time. No, that won't do, there's no getting away from the date: I was born in Doctor Narlikar's Nursing Home on August 15th, 1947. And the time? . . . Oh, spell it out, spell it out: at the precise instant of India's arrival at independence, I tumbled forth into the world. There were gasps. And, outside the window, fireworks and crowds. . . . I was left entirely without a say in the matter. I, Saleem Sinai, later variously called Snot-nose, Stainface, Baldy, Sniffer, Buddha and even Piece-of-the-Moon, had become heavily embroiled in Fate—at the best of times a dangerous sort of involvement. And I couldn't even wipe my own nose at the time.

From the first paragraph it is clear that although the tone of much of this novel is comic, even glib, the trajectory of Saleem's narrative is pessimistic, tragic. Saleem Sinai, spokesman of reason and forbearance, born at that moment of hope and expectation, is slowly overtaken by history. Yet, as he tells us later in the story (after he has chronicled much of his country's loss of innocence), "Men of worth have always roamed the desert."

Even before his birth—during his mother's pregnancy—Saleem's destiny is to become public property. Born to Moslem parents in Bombay in 1947 (like the author), Saleem observes the partitioning of his country, spends a number of years in "exile" in Pakistan, fights as a soldier in the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965 and later in Bangladesh, and returns to India just before Mrs. Gandhi calls the State of Emergency. Along the way, there are riots, riots, and always more riots.

These are the public events of Saleem's life. His private life is equally engrossing, and the two are indissolubly bound together. Born with a monstrous nose that dominates his face, Saleem is only nine years old when he makes a fascinating discovery: his nose has magical properties. It permits him to tune in the thoughts of others, as if the protuberance were some kind of crystal set. These psychic flights link him to the other Midnight Children, born during that first hour of his country's independence.

By age 10, Saleem has become the orchestrator of the 581 surviving Midnight Children (a cryptic reference to the life expectancy of his countrymen), whose desires and expectations are modulated through the parliament of his brain. In time, Saleem comes to believe that all events in the body politic are indirectly shaped by the thoughts of the extraordinary Midnight Children.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Gandhi becomes increasingly aware of the sub-rosa powers of the Midnight Children and quickly retaliates. During the State of Emergency, all of the remaining Midnight Children are rounded up and sterilized, "test- and hysterectomized . . . denied the possibility of reproducing themselves." The narrator's powers of vision permit him to comprehend the final solution of his nation's politicians: "certain high-ups in that extraordinary government (and also certain unelected sons of Prime Ministers) had acquired the power of reduplicating themselves." Saleem envisions gangs of Sanjay Gandhis all over India, herding people off to the slaughterhouse.

Midnight Children is about the denial of fulfillment, the power of time to destroy freedom and expectation. At the end of the narrative, Saleem Sinai, castrated and prematurely aged at 31, sits at his desk, writing his chronicle of the Midnight Children "unable to live or die in peace."

Salman Rushdie has written a dark and complex allegory of his nation's first 31 years. The narrative conveys vindictiveness and pathos, humor and pain, and Rushdie's language and imagery are brilliant. Although his collapsed first- and third-person point of view is reminiscent of recent works by Carlos Fuentes and Gabriel García Márquez, his closest affinities are with V. S. Naipaul. It is as if he had fused that writer's early comic vision (*A House for Mr. Biswas*) with the dark pessimism of his more recent works (*A Bend in the River*, *India: A Wounded Civilization*). Not bad company for a young writer.

Charles R. Larson

Charles R. Larson's books include *The Novel in the Third World* and *The Emergence of African Fiction* (Indiana University Press).

Correspondence, *from page 3*

compare this number with the 300,000 Afrikaners organized into paramilitary units of the proto-Nazi *Ossewa Brandwag*.

School-board bitterness

To the editors:

Your April 18 issue devoted to education gave me hope that there are people out there who care about education. As a member of the school board in a town of 22,000, I encounter few people who care about the quality of education, least of all the city council, which last

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week whacked our proposed budget by $120,000 without really wanting to know what effect this would have. We went to them with our proposed budget representing months of work and stood firm unwilling to make cuts. Ordered by the council to reduce by $120,000, we complied one week later, only to be told we'd been dishonest in the first place by saying there was no fat in the budget. Then punitively they demanded $18,000 more be removed (to hold the city tax hike to one million). Because of the matching dollars set up in our state and others, this 18,000 actually means 24,000 as one out of every three dollars is matched. Clearly they care more for fire trucks than for educational standards. As the school budget decreases, the welfare rolls increase, and instead of turning out productive citizens who are able to contribute to the tax base, we get more candidates for city aid.

School boards elected to run the schools usually are made up of people who really care, and could help, given the chance. Our hands are quickly bound by the city officials who perhaps aren't aware that things have changed since "I was a boy," and by teacher unions that make it almost impossible for us to get rid of any deadwood. School boards strive to be boards of education, but are basically allowed only to fix the broken water fountain or the leaks in the roof.

Anne McIlhenny Gardiner
Augusta, Maine

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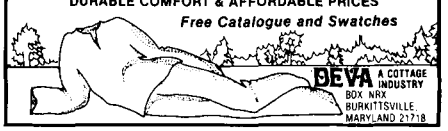
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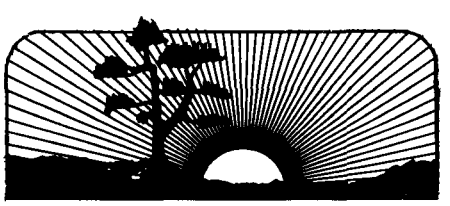

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Memorials

"In a city of white memorials rising, this will be a dark memorial receding." That is how one juror described the design selected for a national Vietnam memorial to be built in Washington. It is an apt description. The memorial will consist of two polished black granite walls, each 200 feet long, meeting to define an oblique triangle. Inside the triangle, the ground will fall away until it reaches the apex, where the walls will be ten feet high. On them will be inscribed the names of the 57,692 Americans killed in the Vietnam War. Nothing but names. No mention of where or how, to say nothing of why, they died. No mention of Vietnam, war, duty, country, sacrifice, courage, or even tragedy. This memorial says one thing: only the dead, nothing besides, remain. Its purpose is to impress upon the visitor the sheer human waste, the utter meaningless of it all. It is an unfortunate choice of memorial. Memorials are built to give context and, possibly, meaning to suffering that is otherwise incomprehensible. We do not memorialize bus accidents, which by nature are contextless, meaningless. To treat the Vietnam dead like the victims of some monstrous traffic accident is more than a disservice to history; it is a disservice to the memory of the 57,000. It is an act of arrogance for us to assign them the status of victims, and nothing but victims. These people saw themselves if not as patriots at least as soldiers. Many went to Vietnam, fought, and died because they thought it right, or at least their duty, to do so. However unfashionable that may seem to us today, it is surely an excess of revisionist zeal to deny the dignity and nobility of dying in the service of one's country, something many of these soldiers believed in. The minimalist design of this memorial was intended to reflect the moral ambiguity of the Vietnam War. It doesn't. Instead, it allows one to hide from it. After all, we went into Vietnam under Kennedy and Johnson not out of greed or territorial ambition, but out of misguided liberal idealism. We soon learned that we were causing and enduring more misery than we could bear. We left, and the war was lost. It was a war in which the ends—worthy as they were, particularly in view of the barbarism that followed—could not justify the means. But the Vietnam dead are not the first American soldiers to die for a losing cause now universally rejected. Soldiers of the Confederacy fought to preserve a society based on human slavery. They lost, thank God, yet in hundreds of memorials throughout the country we honor their memory by recalling the collective and sacrificial nature of their death. One does not have to believe Vietnam was a noble cause to grant its dead the same honor.

In his autobiography G. K. Chesterton writes that we mistakenly believe that children cannot tell fact from fiction. On the contrary, he says, they can tell the two apart quite readily: they simply prefer fiction. Westerners looking at the Middle East are much the same. To make sense of what is going on in Lebanon, for example, they have created a whole host of fictional entities. Lebanon, the country, is one. It is easy to mistake Lebanon for a country because of certain characteristics it shares with others: formal boundaries, a seat at the UN, and the appearance of a central government. In fact, it is a collection of at least six fiefdoms, only two of which are controlled by elements which can in any way be considered indigenous. The Lebanese government is another entity whose existence is greatly exaggerated by the Western press. According to the newspapers, it is in constant motion: consulting, mediating, protesting, negotiating, receiving urgent messages from Kurt Waldheim and itinerant envoys from the US. It is so busy and earnest that no one has the bad manners of a Gertrude Stein to say that there is no there there. The Lebanese government is to government what the World Court is to courts: a convenient diplomatic fiction. In fact, the Lebanese government has less to say about what goes on in Lebanon than the World Court has to say about what goes on in the world. And then there are all those "Christian rightists" running around firing their Uzi submachine guns. Now, Christian rightist is an appellation that fits the likes of Jerry Falwell. But Pierre Gemayel, the Christian military leader, has yet to make known his views on homosexuality, food stamps, or the Kemp-Roth tax cut. His soldiers, who carry on their rifle stocks a picture of the Virgin Mary not of Jesse Helms or Edmund Burke, would have difficulty recognizing a rightist if they saw one. But they can tell a Moslem from a Christian and they can tell a Syrian a mile away: he is the one with the grenade-launcher in his hand and the word "peacekeeper" on his helmet. They read Western fiction too.

Fiction is also the business of the Institute for Historical Review in Los Angeles, a front established by William McCalden, a British neo-Nazi, to "prove" that the murder of six million Jews by Nazi Germany in World War II did not occur. It has enjoyed quite a bit of media play. To hype its cause it offered a $50,000 prize to anyone who could prove that Jews in fact had been gassed in Auschwitz. A survivor of Auschwitz whose family had perished there provided the evidence. When denied the prize, he sued. McCalden never showed up in court to contest the case. All in all, a sordid episode engineered and played up by a malicious racist. What is disturbing is not that such people exist, but that they can achieve so much publicity for themselves and circulation, even respectability, for their views. A recent *Washington Post* report of McCalden's disappearance ends matter-of-factly: "The institute argues that perhaps 350,000 Jews died of disease and war injuries during WW II but not from any intentional extermination campaign." Another newspaper report dignified this nonsense by granting it the coveted epithet "controversial." Why the generous dispensation of legitimacy to such obvious cranks? "If the revisionists are successful in rendering the Holocaust just another matter of debate," wrote Yale psychiatrist Walter Reich recently, "then no piece of history is safe . . . all human experience is conveniently subject to ideological interpretation or wishful negation, and we become nothing more than what we believe." Reich ascribes our willingness to pay any attention at all to these cranks to the "peculiarly contemporary [notion] that everything is debatable and that nothing should be accepted as true that was not personally seen and experienced." Every generation likes to believe that the world started with it. This generation, raised on "Eyewitness News," conditioned by the instant replay, and spared the illumination that comes from tedious historical study, tends to be even more ahistorical than most. All the more reason to build memorials that are not afraid to speak unambiguously from one generation to the next.

C. K.

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